

Sewanee Review

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JULY-SEPTEMBER, 1934

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[Founded 1892]

EDITED BY

WILLIAM S. KNICKERBOCKER

ASIDES AND SOLILOQUIES

MR. Allen Tate, one of the Southern Agrarians, published in *The New Republic* for March 14, March 28, and April 11 a continued essay entitled "Three Types of Poetry". Something remotely resembling a supplement to it was published by his fellow-Agrarian, Mr. John Crowe Ransom, in the May, 1934 issue of *The American Review*, entitled, "Poetry: A Note in Ontology". The essays are important for more than one reason; but one reason is that they are significant indications of the Agrarian return to their true metier and field of competency: the aesthetic theme. (Properly speaking, their curious economics is really aesthetic ontology, a liberation of aesthetic ideas with a mischievously economic terminology.) In an essay, "The Fugitives of Nashville" (April, 1928 issue), an effort was made to identify the extraordinary development of poetry and poetic theory of this group, considered as a group, and in Mr. Allen Tate's article, "Poetry and the Absolute" (January, 1927), the most important aesthetic analysis was made by any member of the Fugitive (later, Agrarian) group. Mr. Tate's *New Republic* articles constitute, in effect, a supplement to his earlier and clearer statement of principles as published in this Quarterly. To understand the former, reference must be made to the latter.

Both Mr. Tate and Mr. Ransom, like everyone else who is

aware of the immediate, have been concerned with the disintegration of the modern age; but they have been delivered from the attendant frustration by recourse to a pragmatic device recognizable as a variety of the hypostasis of the instrument. Acute dialecticians, they have utilized the continuing loyalty of Southerners to "the Southern ideal" but by an act of high creative fancy they have constructed a new content for that term. What they have done is not reducible, (as Sidney Lanier reduced Southern ideals to the Dryden-Scott trilogy of love, valor, and beauty) to verifiable abstractions: on the contrary, they have established a highly modernistic cosmology with affiliations with the world-view of Croce, Chesterton, Belloc, Pareto, Vaihinger, and Wyndham Lewis. But they have set their own peculiar seal and stamp upon what they have assimilated; and it is this sea-change which makes what they have created very novel and very original.

Their very originality and novelty make them difficult to read. One doesn't expect originality or novelty in Southern thinking: the continuity and persistence of patrician elegance discourage and depress any effort at newness or uniqueness of thinking. And that is mostly its strength. The patrician tradition in America finds its last home in the South but even there it must contend with a rival tradition, the frontier tradition which, from the first, has vigorously disputed the high claims to distinction of the patrician tradition (Jackson and Johnson were its classic disputers in Tennessee). This Quarterly, which has always advocated the patrician tradition, finds itself confronted by a vigorous re-assertion of the frontier or yeoman argument and criticism by a group, the leaders of which owe whatever dialectic or power they possess to that same patrician tradition. Yet they repudiate those elements root and branch: they prefer the disparate and discrete modes of expression of the undisciplined, while they advocate a coherent body of doctrine, not precisely yeoman (since their abstractions and terminology transcend the comprehension of the merely literate). This is one of several difficulties in approaching the philosophy of the Agrarians: how to reconcile their espousal of the civilization of the small-farmer with the abstruse nature of aesthetic doctrine. They themselves have not made the reconciliation, so that in discussing them one is compelled to analyze first, their economic proposals, and second, their aesthetic

ontology. The economic proposals have been consistently disputed by this Quarterly.

SOMETHING may be said in defence of the prose of Mr. Tate even though the difficulty is so great that the significance of what he is saying is likely to elude the most patient reader. For Mr. Tate's style is a splotched style—it lacks an explicit structure: it lacks cogency or cumulative progression, and therefore, clarity. Primarily it is an arrogant style: dogmatic, arbitrary, subjective, and pedagogic. But these may be assumed to be devices of agitation, unless they are the obvious effects of a geometric expression—of a mode of statement more cubistic than purely lineal. Mr. Tate has so much to say that the effect of his sentences is like so much stucco. There are gummy coagulations in his modes of expression which require persistent dilutions to be made fluent and clear. In his *New Republic* essays on poetry, a simple device is to read him backward: to take his concluding paragraphs and discover that genuine poetry "is not susceptible to logical demonstration" (p. 239) and that it is, then, "an immediate intuition of the mind" . . . that "poetry finds its true usefulness in its perfect inutility, a focus of repose for the will-driven intellect that constantly shakes the equilibrium of persons and societies with its unrelieved imposition of partial formulas upon the world" (p. 240). Such statements, of course, do not resolve the earlier coagulations but they reveal the difficulty of Mr. Tate's attempts to describe what his title promised: "Three Types of Poetry". One learns in effect that what he is talking about is not so much poetry (understood to be either a state of being or the arranged product of the state of being itself) but rather two types of attitudes towards the world: the practical will or "science" for one; and the mystical tendency, expressed in allegory, for the second.

Allowing for Mr. Tate's peculiar literary style, we may find in his clotted paragraphs two ideas which may be simply stated. First, his preference for metaphor as against simile in poetic expression; and second, his Arnoldian insistence upon the whole poem considered as a created achievement as against the discrete idea of poetry which values the scintillating insertion of a line, couplet, or phrase which is not an inevitable and integral sequence

of its context. What he says about allegory in the first essay, and about the practical will or science in the second, may be safely regarded as pure solecism. His solecistic tendency is superbly illustrated in his superior dismissal of Shelley's couplet in the *Adonais*

Life is a dome of many-colored glass
Which stains the white radiance of eternity

without argument or analysis. His attack on science is part of the obscurantist propaganda of the Agrarians who apparently prefer an imperial subjectivism to recognizable—however tentative, incomplete, and experimental (to say nothing of verifiable)—statements of nature. He and his friends of the movement insist upon making "science", as well as some other familiar words, mean what they want them to mean—Humpty-Dumpty fashion. (It is too bad that they cannot create their own alphabet which would greatly further their efforts at obfuscation!) Mr. Tate continues to insist that "science" means only technology or applied science, though in one place he heretically says (heretical to Agrarian assertions) that he prefers "science" to the "pseudo-science" of poetry. Of course, all this is purely arbitrary; but it is provocative because it provides the occasion to re-examine the bases of one's faith in science, if for no other reason than for the clarification of one's understanding.

WHEN Mr. Tate says that "poetry finds its true usefulness in its perfect inutility", we may understand him to mean that we must kill time somehow; so poetry is useful only in the sense that it helps us to kill time. But why go to that trouble? Why not a motor car drive into the country? Why read poetry when we can kill time in ways that give us a larger sense of our natural, physical well-being—like swimming, or playing tennis, or wrestling, or making love? There is less labor and it is more natural to go to an idea-less movie. Or better still, like plantation negroes, just hang around, saying nothing, thinking nothing, noticing nothing, reading nothing. Why poetry at all?

by *W. Bradford Smith*

WHAT IS METAPHYSICAL POETRY?

METAPHYSICAL poetry now, as in the past, is amply discussed and only vaguely defined. From Drummond to Dryden, and from Johnson to T. S. Eliot it has been variously mentioned, but never distinguished clearly from the rest of our poetical literature. Two metaphysical anthologies have been published in recent years, with introductions roughly indicating the compiler's conception of metaphysical poetry and poems which do not seem to belong even to the editor's own notions of the genre. Grierson reaches the conclusion that 'all great poetry is metaphysical'. Consequently, one might expect any anthology of the World's Best Poetry, or a Treasure House of English Verse to be a comprehensive metaphysical anthology. Obviously a more restrictive definition must be found. It will not do to call great poetry and metaphysical poetry synonymous.

Are Shelley's lyrics—*Love's Philosophy* and 'Music, when soft voices die'—metaphysical? They fulfill Grierson's requirement in that they are 'born of men's passionate thinking about life, love, and death.' They are written in the very metaphysical realm of metaphor, and they subscribe to ideas that are noticeably present in the work of Donne, the exemplar of the metaphysical muse—fulfillment of physical love and thoughts of death. They are, however, far from the terrain of metaphysical poetry. They are romantic, of course, and the approach is not primarily from the intellect. The poem on death has none of the metaphysical concern with dissolution, nor the psychological analysis of emotion—but I trespass upon my definition. Let me say merely that metaphysical poetry probes the depths; it does not consciously and primarily seek the wings of Daedalus. If the poet is scorched, it is

rather with too much probing into the fire than with flying too near the sun.

Metaphysical poetry is concerned with life, love, and death, and it is metaphorical, but the corollary does not hold true. Neither is all reflective or philosophical poetry metaphysical, as Miss Taggard seems to think. In fact, philosophy which postulates an orderly view of the universe, is inimical to the metaphysical muse, for her tortuous wonderings are born of unresolved complexity.

Let us first of all agree that by metaphysical poetry is meant that type of poetry of which Donne is the great exemplar and which Dr. Johnson attacked under the term 'metaphysical'. The word is, in certain senses, unfortunate, and as Johnson intended it obscurity and subtlety stood foremost. But the word also bears the meanings 'having real being or the essential nature of reality' and 'being concerned with the analysis of experience.' In these senses, as we shall see, it is eminently fitting. There is a further appropriateness suggested in the etymology of the word since meta-physics, or coming after physics, the knowledge of the natural world, might well be adapted for a poetry which makes such large and fruitful use of an imagery based upon realistic, physical terms.

Where are we to look for metaphysical poetry? Who are the metaphysical poets? Miss Taggard is correct when she says that metaphysical poetry is not confined to an age, that it is recurrent throughout all poetry. But, to choose the most obvious examples in our hunt for a definition, let us concern ourselves largely with John Donne and his followers in the seventeenth century—the Herberts, Carew, Marvell. The great flowering of metaphysical poetry is due to them, and to a few others. What are the outstanding characteristics of their poetry as it distinguishes itself from other verse? Broadly, I should say the peculiar flavour of their thought, and its close application to a well-developed, striking, and accurate imagery.

The manifestations are various. Let me mention them here, and prove them later, by quotation. The thought is sensual, whether it move toward eroticism or to an almost morbid pondering of death. The thought encompasses large horizons, bending the universe into the small circle of man's comprehension. There is, however, no ordered philosophy: complexity, unresolved, is apparent.

The eye is too keen to accept an ordered view of a disordered world. Intellect controls this poetry. Passion is examined and probed, not eulogized. Imagery is used not because it is pretty but because it fits the idea. The metaphysical poet has a way of making his image and his idea become one, the image an explanation rather than an embellishment. Metaphors are not high-flown, however ingenious they may be. The metaphysical poet prefers, indeed, a type of common imagery peculiar to himself. He uses the terms employed by an astronomer, a lawyer, a tradesman, and turns them to the use of a highly effective metaphorical vein. He delights in physical concepts and somatic terms. He is a blend of all the contrarities of nature—skeptical, religious, sensual, scholarly, fanciful, abstruse. I must insist upon complexity as a keynote of his nature—complexity born of a desire to examine and analyze everything in his experience.

Here is a short definition, based upon the metaphysical poetry of the seventeenth century. I attempt, hazardingly perhaps, to include all the poetry that is pertinent, and to exclude all that is not truly metaphysical:

Metaphysical Poetry is a paradoxical inquiry, imaginative and intellectual, which exhausts, by its use of antithesis and contradiction and unusual imagery, all the possibilities in a given idea. This idea will predominantly be a psychological probing of love, death, or religion as the more important matters of experience in the life of the poet, and will be embodied in striking metaphorical utterance or in the use of the common (familiar) or the scientific word.

This, one will say, requires some clarification. But before I go on to prove these points by quotation from the poets themselves, I should like to review some comments, past and present, on metaphysical poetry.

Drummond, who probably first used the term, thinks of metaphysical poetry as a thing of 'scholastic quiddities' which has forsaken the classical models and is, therefore, damned. Dryden also thinks of metaphysical poetry as 'nice speculations of philosophy,' that are opposed to 'nature'. Johnson, though prejudiced by his age, offers a reasonable criticism and a convincing analysis in his essay on Cowley. He attacks the linking of 'heterogeneous ideas,' the 'slender conceits and laboured particularities,' but there is a concession:

If they frequently threw away their wit upon false conceits, they likewise sometimes struck out unexpected truth; if their conceits were far-fetched, they were often worth the carriage. To write on their plan, it was at least necessary to read and think.

To Johnson, the greatest sin of these poets was that of non-conformity. Chapman, a hundred and fifty years before, had well stated the opposite attitude, and his premise is one that any metaphysical poet must adopt.

I know that empty and dark spirits will complain of palpable night [Is this Johnson?]; but those that beforehand have a radiant and light-bearing intellect, will say they can pass through Corinna's garden without the help of a lantern.

Of modern critics, whom I can mention only inadequately, T. S. Eliot makes several valuable suggestions. The 'elaboration of figure to the farthest stage to which ingenuity can carry it,' the frequent development by rapid association of thought, and the presence of the analytic method are a few of his most important observations. In the best metaphysical verse, he says, the idea and simile become one; observe, for example, Bishop King's *Exequy*. Grierson suggests the psychological nature of the poetry—its probing of love and religion. It is, he says, more intellectual and less verbal (as fulfilling, one thinks, Meredith's cry for 'More brain, O God, more brain!') The poet is an analyst of his own moods and experiences, but is unable to unify love and religion in his life, both being vital to his experience. This view of the metaphysical school is valuable in its emphasis on an inner conflict of sensuality and spirituality and in its characterization of the verse as psychological. Common opinion has assigned subjectivism to the romantic period of the nineteenth century. It is important to recognize a deep current of self-interest in the literature of the seventeenth century, and a psychological probing which, for accurate and profound analysis, far exceeds the vagueness and generalities of the romantic poets.

Angularity, saltiness of phrase, a coldness which allows self-probing—these appropriate phrases contribute to Miss Taggard's definition. The poetry is psychological, and born of a need to find (and perhaps not finding?) a thoughtful pattern for the universe. The small, every-day image linked with a large idea, concern and

realization and tortured wonder at the complexity of life and the universe are the true marks of the metaphysical poet.

Duplicity of thought, a mingling of life and book knowledge, an attempt to reconcile the body with the soul are advanced as elements of metaphysical poetry in Professor Williamson's book on *The Donne Tradition*. Image and meaning are one; the former seems essential to an expression of the latter, for both are uniquely the poet's own. Professor Williamson finds an apt expression for the peculiar concern of these poets with death—he calls it the 'metaphysical shudder.'

Then worms shall try
That long-preserved virginity.

from Marvell, is an excellent example.

With my short definition, and with some suggestions from these several critics, I have staked out the domain of metaphysical poetry. It now becomes necessary to prove my claim. Quotation is the only means of proof, and unfortunately one cannot quote freely enough in a short article. I can only suggest that a leisurely reading of Donne and Marvell and a few others will bear out the definition. My contention is that metaphysical poetry at its best is any and all of these things. The term has been too loosely construed; an examination of the best metaphysical poetry must necessarily yield these conclusions.

Imagery is important. I cannot say enough about the precision and appropriateness of metaphysical metaphor.

... Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say her body thought.

That is from Donne's Second Anniversary. Beautifully said, but more than that, expressed in such discriminating metaphor that it becomes impossible to have said it in any other way.

How great love is, presence best trial makes,
But absence tries how long this love will be;
To take a latitude
Sun, or stars, are fittest viewed
At their brightest, but to conclude
Of longitudes, what other means have we,
But to mark when and where the dark eclipses be?

Here too we have the exact image, each point in the main idea corresponding with its accompanying image. This last metaphor brings us to a consideration of the Radical Image, as Professor Wells calls it in his *Poetic Imagery*. The comparison between two terms of the metaphor is incongruent, ingenious, and the minor term possesses, intrinsically, little imaginative value. These images always result in a distinct shock to the reader. The intellectual exercise seems to retard, for a moment, imaginative sympathy. But not for long. The image stands, at last, in strong contrast to mere exuberance of phrase.

Closely allied to the Radical Image is the use of common everyday phrases and of scientific terminology. Unusual metaphorical effects are obtained in the use of words of ordinary talk. The poet, indeed, 'hitches his star to a wagon.' The body is the 'book' of the soul, or a 'poor inn.' Of the heroine in the *Second Anniversary*,

Whose *twilights* were more clear than our *mid-day*.

'A virtuous soul is 'seasoned timber' that 'never gives.' Marvell has 'My *vegetable* love should *grow*.' This usage results in an impingement of added meaning upon terms of common speech. It creates an imagery at once alive and familiar, but striking because of its ingenious use of seemingly dull material.

And as the diction is familiar, so the thought remains common-sense and reasonable. There is a tight, logical structure about metaphorical poetry which makes it almost akin to the geometric proposition, with its 'given' and 'to prove.' Recall for a moment Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress*. Given:—her coyness; To Prove:—that coyness is criminal. Proof:—then follow all the reasons necessary for the conversion of his mistress to his own beliefs. There is not 'world enough, and time,' deserts of eternity stretch before them when beauty and song shall be of little worth, youth must be enjoyed—but 'it were profanation' to paraphrase the poem; the point is obvious.

I have mentioned in the short definition the exhaustive treatment of metaphor—the careful and precise relation of many points between the major and minor terms throughout a fairly long poem. Let us call this for convenience the *Extended Image*. Donne employs it, impressively in *The Flea*, *Valediction of My Name in the*

Window, parts of the *Second Anniversary*, but most happily of all in *A Lecture Upon the Shadow*. I cannot quote in full; a brief resumé must suffice. The shadows which moved with the poet and his love as they walked were, in the morning, before them—like the disguises of infant love. At noon the shadows are underfoot:

And to brave clearness all things are reduced.

But as the shadows decline westward, so in the decline of love disguises formerly made to blind others will be made to blind themselves. The poem ends in a couplet which excellently summarizes the image:

Love is a growing, or full constant light,
And his short minute, after noon, is night

Emily Dickinson, a poet who, I am convinced, more than any other except Donne, has faithfully followed the metaphysical muse, has several extended images of a fine and compelling nature which the perusal of her pages will readily discover to the reader. Thomas Carew, perhaps Donne's closest follower, is particularly rich in the extended image, and employs it often in his more erotic poems, notably in *The Rapture*. Marvell spreads an extended image, with some digressions, through seventy lines of his poem *Upon Appleton House*. And then there is Henry King's *Exequy*, which likens the poet's life, after the death of the loved one, to a journey every day of which brings him closer to his goal. The tapestry of thought is richly interwoven with imagery,

But thou wilt never more appear
Folded within my hemisphere,
Since both thy light and motion
Like a fled star is fall'n and gone;
And twixt me and my soul's dear wish
An earth now interposed is.

Notice the double value of the word earth—the spiritual severance and the interment. The journey progresses:

Each minute is a short degree,
And ev'ry hour a step toward thee.
At night when I betake to rest,
Next morn I rise nearer my west
Of life, almost by eight hour's sail,—

Until

... my pulse like a soft drum
Beats my approach, tells thee I come;
And slow howe'er my marches be,
I shall at last sit down by thee.

Intellect, in these extended metaphors, glides smoothly into the channel of imagery which is its fittest expression.

But I must leave the consideration of imagery and go on to the important characteristics of metaphysical thought. Let it first be said that the metaphysical poet, whether by chance or requirement, is almost always sensual, and usually erotic somewhere or other in the course of his utterance. The reason for this I leave to the psychologist. But it makes apparent, I think, the reason for his delight in somatic terms and the use of physical, or physiological terms in his imagery. The famous line,

To get with child a mandrake root,

or,

... pictures in our eyes to get
Was all our propagation,

are only two of many examples. The doctrine of inconstancy is too recurrent to need more than passing mention:

And swear
No where
Lives a woman true and fair.

The poet is bound by no stringent rules and his questionings reach beyond the petty concerns of Mrs. Grundy.

Sentimentality is banned—any preachment coming direct from the emotions and not interpreted and expounded by the intellect is not metaphysical—here we have a definite distinguishing rule. This is not to say, however, that there is no emotion, for the poetry becomes at times almost ecstatic. But again the paradox—emotion is restrained although it is abundant; even though it achieve transport it is not allowed to overflow. Observe the quiet majesty of Donne's *Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness*, or the admirable restraint which obtains in such a poem as *A Hymn to God the Father*, where the recesses of emotion are bared and might easily run over into sentimentalism and undignified pe-

tion. Intellect stands at the flood-gate of emotion and keeps even the turbulent stream of impassioned poetry within her banks.

This poetry is metaphysical in another sense, for the poet is interested in his relation to the world—the difference between the circles of the universe and of man's mind concerns him. Man is able to take into his circle the whole universe, relating the detail of his own life to the larger canvas of general experience and natural law. Emily Dickinson's lines beginning, 'The brain is wider than the sky', are an admirable statement of this attitude.

Masculinity is a definite characteristic. Metaphors are bold, the attitude toward religion one of fearlessness or at least of skepticism, and the verse logical rather than intuitive. Sincerity is a hall-mark of good metaphysical verse; without it the method of a metaphorical poetry is unsuccessful. Donne's lines are appropriate:

On a huge hill
Cragged, and steep, truth stands, and he that will
Reach her, about must, and about must go;
And what the hill's suddenness resists, win so.

Donne's conception of truth is well stated here. She is placed on a cragged and steep hill, and Donne's method of reaching her—as that of others of his school—is precisely the method he describes. This does not imply the use of subterfuge; it denotes a purposeful assault, on the part of these poets, to discover the truth as they conceive it. That their concept of truth demanded a recognition of all the contradictions of human existence makes their achievement the more remarkable.

It is not untrue to say that, more than any other poets, they have made a serious and sincere attempt to render their ideas of life in poetry. Technique has not been their sole aim; they have had no theories of poetry to uphold except the conviction that it should be written with all the perception and thought and analysis they could bring to it. In this respect they are realists of the first rank. Sentimentality or pure melody do not concern them, but a true rendition of human experience as they find it, with all its confusions and denials and beliefs.

The inherent honesty of this poetry worked its way into the very rhythm of expression, and here is to be found an answer to the accusations of harshness often levelled at Donne's verse. That

Donne was incapable of smoothness can amply be refuted by reference to *Go and Catch a Falling Star*, or any of the lighter things among his poetry. It is the songs which run to a deep and probing analysis of love which are irregular, tortured in form, and as rough in metre as they are involved in thought. A helpful contrast is provided by *The Canonization*, which begins in fairly even metre, even though it is an outburst of feeling:

For God's sake hold your tongue, and let me love;
Or chide my palsy, or my gout;
My five gray hairs, or ruin'd fortune flout;

as soon, however, as the poet becomes involved in his own argument, the verse takes on a noticeable ruggedness:

Call's what you will, we are made such by love;
Call her one, me another fly,
We're tapers too, and at our own cost die.

So, among the metaphysical poets, the technique of rhythm as well as the use of imagery, is inseparably allied to the artist's background of thought.

One critic of the metaphysical school I have not mentioned. It is Carew, the man who caught the standard from Donne and turned out some very fine metaphysical poetry, not the least of which is an *Elegy Upon the Death of Dr. Donne*. It contains, or is, a definition of metaphysical poetry unusual in the clarity of its observation—the artist describing his own art. I can quote, inadequately, but a few lines. Donne

Did through the eye the melting heart distil,
And the deep knowledge of dark truths so teach,
As sense might judge what fancy could not reach . . .

Since to the awe of thy imperious wit
Our troublesome language bends, made only fit
With her tough thick-ribb'd hoops to gird about
Thy giant fancy, which had proved too stout
For their soft melting phrases.

This praise of a great metaphysical poet is itself a fine piece of metaphysical poetry. Not often can a poet so justly estimate and define the type of poetry which he himself is writing. Carew notices the omnipresence of 'sense' in metaphysical poetry—in-

tellekt clarified by judicious yet striking metaphor, or as he has it, 'rich and pregnant fancy'. 'Masculine expression' is important: not the 'soft melting phrases' but a tough, logical diction which requires of the language more than it can give in the expression of 'dark truths' too deep, perhaps, for any expression.

All these things are the ear-marks of metaphysical poetry. A distinctive imagery and diction and a unique intellect are the signs by which it may be detected. Always the imagery is crystal-clear, serving as a window through which the thought may be observed, not as an ornament which detracts from the central design. Izaak Walton, that charming biographer of Donne, knew this when he said,

His fancy was inimitably high, equalled only
By his great wit, both being made useful by
A commanding judgment.

These words, interpreted, enforce a central point of our definition—the inseparable twinship of imagery, or fancy, and judgment, or intellect, which was the bone of this body of poetry.

Sonority is not the goal of metaphysical poetry; neither is a romantic feeling for nature nor the expression of philosophic creeds. The metaphysical poet is interested first in his own life and experiences, next in the life and actions of those who are close to him. The careful analysis of these things leads, quite without premeditation, to a human understanding of far greater universality than the theological apologist or the romantic effusionist can attain. The deeply probing finger of the metaphysical poet seems to uncover both personal and universal truths. In climbing the hill to his own satisfaction, he discovers that the world lies spread before his feet.

Just so long as men wonder about themselves and the world and so long as they must go to intellects greater than their own for analysis and vision, and for the conviction that other men have sought to solve the same problems, metaphysical poetry will continue to be of importance. It may be that another poet like John Donne will arise (as Emily Dickinson did) to express these things as only the metaphysical medium can express them. For the contradictions and complexities of existence have nowhere else been as well expressed. The mind that throws out some truths

and retains others, to the better establishment of a unified view, has its value. But one enjoys the statement of wholeness, too, for the satisfaction it brings of being true because of its diversity. The ironical concurrence of life in all its opposites—body and soul, intellect and passion, grandeur and simplicity—were fascination to the minds of the metaphysical poets. This purgative of wholeness is good for the intellect, which tends otherwise to the acceptance of half-truths and unfinished pictures.

Definitions always attempt the impossible. For it is impossible in a few words—or in many volumes—accurately to convey anything, when knowledge of itself is the only way to complete understanding. The examples I have been able to give here are obviously inadequate, but the reader can easily find more for himself. The definition will become clear, I think, when you turn to the poetry itself.

One scarcely expects to find a perfect example of any definition, particularly of a literary one. By rare chance we have that example here. Andrew Marvell's *To His Coy Mistress* happily discovers all the things I have enumerated in definition of metaphysical poetry. It is strange that Donne, the father and great exemplar of the metaphysical strain, did not provide it. That irony he would probably have appreciated. Turn to the poem, then, and discover the metaphysical combination of thought and image, the sensuality, the universal outlook, the distinctively common diction ('my vegetable love'), the metaphysical shudder. All the things which have made metaphysical poetry great are here combined in a perfect poem. There are lines that one never forgets: they are great, and they are truly metaphysical. Who could fail to admire the poetical tradition which produced these lines, so close to the peak of all poetry?

But at my back I always hear
Times winged chariot hurrying near,
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.

by Mary B. Ward

SOUTHERN AGRARIAN POET

Kaleidoscopic, turning, turning,
The wheels click cogs, the wheels go round,
And pipes of Pan are stilled by roaring
Of other pipes not fancy-bound.

So near to earth and yet so far—
The very atmosphere confounds
Where breath of antique furnishings
With belching factory smoke abounds;
Where silver, old, magnificent,
Knows indexed bungalows for rent.

Poor poet! how he strives and groupes
His way through wanton music's keys,
While rhythm flows within his veins,
And his heart knows wistful jubilees,
The while he seeks his borrowed rhyme
Too close to coarse-mouthed candor; sets
His tunes to whirring modern time,
Confused in this, his changeling home
Of song defeat, frustration, foil;
So, wisely now he seeks the fields,
And Antaeus-like takes strength from soil.

by Frank A. Doggett

DONNE'S PLATONISM

IF Donne is the poet of entreaty, of ardent supplication, of dialectic and persuasion, the questions would arise, in view of his stylistic innovations, whether his arguments differed from those of his contemporaries, and in what ways his thinking represented a departure from that of the poets of his own day. In such a poet as Donne, one who projected his passions as logic, thought should mean a great deal; seemingly style would be bent to the ends of thought. But in the present case this is true only in a sense. Perhaps the matter could be most clearly put by saying that Donne's thinking is part of his style. It is a manner with him, and, in this way, another stylistic innovation. Donne is not a philosophic poet in the likeness of Spenser, nor a poet with a system like Lucretius or Blake, nor an ethical poet like Wordsworth. He is concerned with mental experience and worldly affairs, human contacts and rationalized imagination: in general these are the subjects of his poems. He is a moralist, but a realism that is an intrinsic part of his personality modified his moralizing strain in a peculiar manner. Although thought in the poetry is an element of the poet's style, and a major element, he is more alive to his senses than has usually been conceded, but the sensuous in him serves the intellect: so much so that for Donne to think is almost a sensuous act. It is an experience of the intellect to read Donne as it is an experience of the senses to read Keats.

As a rule Donne's contemporaries did not use thought as a stylistic means, inextricably bound to prosody and rhetoric. In many of these poets, the thought was doubtless a convention, but some like Spenser reasoned seriously and with sincerity. A predominant strain in English poetry of the late Elizabethan age was a modified form of Platonism that came to England by way of Italy. Few poets of that day ignored Platonism; none could have

been entirely ignorant of it. For many years it was a fashion for court lovers to dress their aims, moral or otherwise, in the phrases of the Platonists. Two principal sources of this philosophy for Englishmen were the works of Ficino and *Libro del Cortegiano* by Castiglione, a book quite accessible to Elizabethan gentlemen in the great translation of Sir Thomas Hoby. The former gave them theory and system, the latter application. Undoubtedly the latter was the best known.

Even if Donne were not affected by the Neo-Platonism of the court and of the contemporary poetry, he could hardly avoid it from another source. It would be absurd to conjecture that he was not conversant with Neo-Platonic theories. It is the opinion of this writer that he was not influenced by this modern variety of Platonism, but that he was fully aware of it in his own ironic manner. However, there was another type of Platonism from another time Donne would regard more seriously. To such a student of the Church Fathers as he was, a certain infiltration of Platonism was inevitable. He could not fail to absorb it from a reading of Augustine alone, even if Plotinus were unknown to him. Mr. Grierson believes that Donne had read Plotinus in the translation of Ficino¹ but, apparently, it was not the new Platonism that the Italian in his *Commentarium in Convivium* gave to the Renaissance that modified Donne's thought.² On the contrary, his philosophy seems to derive from the Schoolmen, and has not the aesthetic foundation that a study of the *Enniads* would have given him. A brief survey of Platonism as it existed in English poetry from Spenser to Milton will be useful at this point to illuminate the subtle lines of divergence on this subject of Donne and his contemporaries.³

II.

Neo-Platonism was an ethics founded on Aesthetics. Although individuals frowned upon it, the Church did not take a stand against this fragile heresy. The basic doctrine was the reality of an earthly beauty apprehensible to the senses as compared to a heavenly beauty apprehensible to the soul. As in orthodox Christ-

¹Grierson II, p. 42.

²The brief analysis of Platonism to follow is taken in part from John Smith Harrison, *Platonism in English Poetry of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*.

ianity God and love were identified, so in Neo-Platonism were God and the essence of this heavenly beauty. Truth itself was an aspect of the beauty known to the soul, and holiness was the condition of the soul in which the beauty of truth could be known and loved. Wisdom (or truth) because of its ineffable nature was intelligible only to the soul. The soul contained three principles: one rational and two irrational, the irrational being anger and appetite. Temperance was the condition necessary for virtue, the harmony of the soul in the body resulting from the ascendancy of the rational faculty and its dominance over the two irrational faculties: the order gained when reason controlled the passions. Moral ideas were the beauty that the reason conceived, and morality itself, as beauty, had a luminous reality. Virtue was power, and the virtuous mind could subdue evil without heavenly intervention even; the glory of balance within the soul shone through the mask of flesh, and shattered lances or bowed evil semblances with its radiance. Earthly love was related to heavenly love and differed from it, outside of its finite nature, mainly in that it was an aspiration rather than a realization. The first stage of this aspiration was the gross awakening of the senses to bodily beauty. Love began to cast off its mortality when the lover first apprehended that the beauty of the mind was greater than that of the body, and as soul dawned upon soul, he recognized the idea he held of the beauty of the beloved in his memory of his previous heavenly existence, and appreciated that the love of soul beauty is more honorable than that of bodily beauty. From this point it was possible to progress to a knowledge of the universal concept of womanly beauty, the beauty of all womankind.* From this he might reach an understanding of heavenly beauty itself, the divine essence.

The Neo-Platonists conceived of a heavenly love and an earthly love. The former was the love in the soul for the realities of the unseen world, or the love of God for his creation, known to man because of the indwelling of God's spirit. The latter was of two kinds: passion found in the desire for the enjoyment of beauty and a spiritual passion entirely devoid of the sensuous. The highest type of love was not physical desire, but the mind aspiring to the essential beauty of the soul. Thus it can be seen that love

*See Sir Thos. Hoby's translation of Castiglione, *The Courtier*, Book IV.

in its reality was the desire of the soul for beauty, and any emphasis on the physical would destroy this reality. This was true because the soul, if dominated by the senses, assumed corporality and a dank visibility. Spiritual love was unaffected by time or space, as the lover carried the idea of his beloved in his soul. The convention of Platonic love, since it precluded sensual desire, connoted an innocent and hopeless passion. Perhaps the most characteristic conception of this love was that it consisted in a mingling of souls, of minds, of essences. The Platonic poets in England wished to oppose the idea of physical passion in love, and they attempted to explain the attraction of bodies, the sex instinct of which they themselves were aware.

It is plain that the Neo-Platonists in fusing Platonic thought and Christianity introduced certain ideals, if not foreign to, at least not characteristic of Christian ethics. The chief novelty lay in the aesthetic basis of morality. In its contempt for corporeality, its rejection of the body, it committed the gravest and most consequential heresy. To one who had signed the Thirty-Nine Articles and done so thoughtfully, the heresy could hardly be overlooked. One of the essentials of Christian faith was the belief in the resurrection of the body and its unalterable immortality. Here, especially, was a flaw that a careful student of theology would perceive. However, Neo-Platonism had an intermittent career from the first book of the *Faerie Queene* well into the nineteenth century. Its most successful exponent was Spenser, its most elaborate proponent Henry More, and between these names a hundred years of activity in Platonic poetry existed.

III.

No English poet of his day could have tracked down a heresy with such subtle and consummate skill and such precision as Donne. Certainly none has created a more convincing one than the author of *Biathanatos*. As a youth Donne could have accepted heresy, particularly if by such an acceptance he could have harboured his questing mind in shores not outlawed by the state church. The third satire suggests that during the '90's he inclined to anti-probabilism:

" . . . though truth and falsehood bee
 Neare twins, yet truth a little elder is;
 Be busie to seeke her, beleeeve me this,
 Hee's not of none, nor worst, that seekes the best.
 To adore, or scorne an image, or protest,
 May all be bad; doubt wisely; in strange way
 To stand inquiring right, is not to stray."⁴

Later in the poem he says:

"Foole and wretch, wilt thou let thy Soule be tyed
 To mans lawes, by which she shall not be tryed
 At the last day? Oh will it then boot thee
 To say a Philip, or a Gregory,
 A Harry, or a Martin taught thee this?
 Is not this excuse for mere contraries,
 Equally strong? cannot both sides say so?"⁵

A very definite statement is contained in one of the letters:*

You know I never fettered nor imprisoned the word Religion; not straightning it Frierly, ad Religiones facitias, (as the Romans call well their orders of Religion) nor immuring it in a Rome, or a Wittemberg, or a Geneva; they are all virtuall beams of one Sun, and wheresoever they finde clay hearts, they harden them, and moulder them into dust; and they entender and mollifie waxen. They are not so contrary as the North and South Poles; and that they are connatural pieces of one circle. Religion is Christianity, which being too spiritual to be seen by us, doth therefore take an apparent body of good life and works, so salvation requires an honest Christian.

From the date of his entry into Lincoln's Inn until at least several years after his marriage, Donne, althought not without religion, was without a Church; at least he lacked the convictions and the definite beliefs that make the Church a home and not a mere lodging. Donne was in an exceedingly embarrassing position. He was directly descended from the sister of Sir Thomas More and the Rastells, a staunch Catholic family, among these, William Rastell, the Jurist, and John Rastell, the author of interludes. He was directly descended from the sister of Sir Thomas More writer. All these figures suffered for their religious beliefs. His mother remained a Catholic all her life and lived to survive her son. He knew well the haunted existence of a recusant, although it was never to be his. His younger brother, Henry Donne, who

*Grierson I, *Satyre III*, p. 157, ii. 73-78.

*Grierson I, *Satyre III*, p. 158 ii. 93-99;

**Letters to Seuerall Persons of Honour* (ed. by C. E. Merrill, Jr.) *To Sir H. R.*, p. 25, quoted in part by Grierson II, pp. 115-16.

occupied chambers in Lincoln's Inn near him, was so unfortunate as to hide a Seminarist in his apartments, and was plunged into a prison when this was discovered, dying there of a fever in a few months, a boy scarcely twenty years. Most of his mother's family lived in exile and it seemed that he would be forced to choose between leaving his birthplace and sinking into opportunism. He did not choose the former and he could not choose the latter. His innate sincerity drove him to a constant and incessant search for doctrines that he could believe, and, at the same time, live. It was not until he had reached "age, death's twilight", that he was able to accept the Anglican Communion with faith as well as with reason.

During the years of indecision, Donne might well have adopted a mysticism like the Neo-Platonic philosophy, accepted by the orthodox in Catholic nations as well as in England. Two obstacles existed, however, to such an acceptance: his scholastic training and his temperament. The Schoolmen lifted many ideas, the doctrine of ecstasy, for example, out of Plotinus but they rejected the aesthetic basis of his morality and his denial of a high place for the body. In fact the definite separation of soul and body was not admitted, and when it was, it resulted in such heresies as Nestorianism. Coleridge in a note on *Sermon XV* in Donne's *LXXX Sermons*¹ very definitely asserts the indivisibility of body and soul. The content is so applicable to the present discussion that it should be quoted at this point.

Nothing in Scripture, nothing in reason, commands or authorizes us to assume or suppose any bodiless creature. It is the incommunicable attribute of God. But all bodies are not flesh, nor need we suppose that all bodies are corruptible. *There are bodies celestial.* In the three following paragraphs of this sermon, we trace wild fantastic positions grounded on the arbitrary notion of man as a mixture of heterogeneous components, which Des Cartes shortly afterwards carried into its extremes. On this doctrine the man is a mere phenomenal result, a sort of brandy-sop or toddy-punch. It is a doctrine unsanctioned by, and indeed inconsistent with, the Scriptures. It is not true that body plus soul makes man. Man is not the *syntheton* or composition of body and soul, as the two component units. No; man is the unit, the *prothesis*, and and body and soul are the two poles, the positive and negative,

¹Complete Works of S. T. Coleridge (edited by Professor Shedd) Harper & Bros. 1858, Vol. V, p. 95-96.

the *thesis* and *antithesis* of the man; even as attraction and repulsion are the two poles by which one and the same magnet manifests itself.

Coleridge was not a follower of the Patristic writers, but his mind could distinguish, as *their's* could, and as Donne's could, a simple heresy like this absolute separation of body and soul. Asceticism was not incompatible with the acknowledgement of the high place assigned to the body, in view of the Resurrection, nor was it inconsistent with the doctrine of the oneness of body and soul, the two differing as attributes might differ. Coleridge was objecting to the thought in an analogy Donne had used, a matter of small importance in the light of Donne's central beliefs on this subject. Donne was not over-careful of the origins of his analogies, and often overlooked their implications. However, even in his youth, he saw the body in the light of its future immortality and assigned it, consequently, to a high position, and he would have appreciated Coleridge's conception of man as a unit as much as he would have appreciated the figure from magnetism that elucidates it. In the *LXXX Sermons* Donne assigned what he considered its proper dignity to the body.*

The Father was pleased to breathe into this body, at first, in the Creation; the Son was pleased to assume this body himself, after, in the Redemption; the Holy Ghost is pleased to consecrate this body, and make it his Temple, by his sanctification . . . Marvell at this, at the wonderful love of God to the body of man, and thou wilt favour it so, as not to macerate thine owne body, with uncommanded and inhumane flagellations, and whippings, nor afflict their bodies, who are in thy charge, with inordinate labour; thou wilt not dishonour this body, as it is Christ's body, nor deform it, as it is thine owne, with intemperance, but thou wilt behave they selfe towards it so, as towards one, whom it hath pleased the King to honour, with a resurrection.

But it is Donne's conception of earthly love that concerns a student of the secular poems. As the English Neo-Platonists applied their ideas of heavenly love to earthly love, so Donne must have related his most abstract thinking to the simpler and more concrete problem of sex that confronted him as a young man.

It is true that there are some isolated examples of Neo-Platonic

*Quoted in E. M. Simpson, *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, p. 100.

doctrines in Donne's poetry. But it is equally true that these are non-essential to the central doctrines of the aesthetic morality from which Donne separated himself; or they are concessions to the courtly fashions of the day that Donne allowed himself to make in some instances. The two single examples that this writer has been able to find in the entire canon of Donne's poetry of the Neo-Platonic belief in the aesthetic basis of Morality are contained in the later poems. The first is from the *Holy Sonnets*, and is a reminiscence of his youth and his days of promiscuous love-making:

"... but as in my idolatrie
I said to all my profane mistresses,
Beauty, of pittie, foulnesse onely is
A signe of rigour: so I say to thee,
To wicked spirits are horrid shapes assign'd
This beauteous forme assures a pitious minde."⁹

The other example is even more definite, but it is contained in a verse letter to a lady, who was accustomed to the Neo-Platonic flattery of the court, and a patroness of such Petrarchans as Drayton and Daniel.

"If good and lovely were not one, of both
You were the transcript, and originall,
The Elements, the Parent, and the Growth,
And every peece of you, is both their all."¹⁰

It was certainly a temptation for Donne, when addressing a lady whom he wished to compliment as being both good and beautiful, to find the two qualities but one attribute of her being; and it is notable that he rarely succumbed to it. It is quite possible that it took a conscious effort to refrain from that gracious sophistry.

In another letter the readers might infer from the relation given virtue and beauty a disparity between these abstractions. And the readers were the daughters of Sidney's Stella!

"Shee therefore wrought upon that part of you
Which is scarce less than soule, as she could do,
And so hath made your beauty, Virture too."¹¹

The lady's beauty was not originally one with virtue, but became so through the influence of a higher virtue. To a Neo-Platonist virtue and beauty were identical; and that which is already true

⁹Grierson I, *Holy Sonnets*, XIII, p. 328, ll. 9-14.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, *To The Countesse of Bedford*, p. 193, ll. 55-58.

¹¹Grierson I, *A Letter to the Lady Carey, and Mrs. Essex Riche*, p. 223. ll. 40-42.

cannot be made true, nor can what already exists be made to exist. Therefore the unity of beauty and virtue in this lady was a miracle, a rarity, a phoenix. In the next stanza he explains why her beauty causes virtuous thoughts in others, an explanation that hinges on this unusual phenomenon, mentioned in the preceeding stanza.

"Hence comes it, that your Beauty wounds not hearts,
As Others, with prophand and sensuall Darts,
But as an influence, virtuous thoughts imparts."¹⁹

The higher virtue which makes her "beauty, Virtue too" is soul; hence it can be deduced that her beauty was not a beauty of the soul, or that the soul did not confer that beauty. The implication of the passage is not Neo-Platonic; Donne, if he were using a doctrine drawn from a system, would not commit an error in logic.

The Neo-Platonists believed that beauty was purely spiritual. "Ficino, for instance combats the idea, which he says some hold, that beauty is nothing but the proportion of an object with a certain sweetness of color."²⁰

Spenser opposed the theory that beauty was proportion and color in his *Hymne in Honour of Beautie*. "On this point the balance the situation depended. Donne had a position to express, and it was by no means a vague one. In *An Anatomy of the World*, he affirmed: "Beauty, that's colour, and proportion."²¹ Donne, however was but little concerned with beauty. As a rule it is a common enough word in poetry; in Donne it is comparatively infrequent. Even if he did consider beauty to be "color and proportion", as a poet he did not seek to praise it, or express it. Donne was interested in intellect and experience, and his quick unadorned mind did not select the forms that represent beauty of the traditional kind. It would be foolish to assert that Donne's poems lack beauty, even the sweet beauty of color and proportion that convention has set aside from all other forms to designate as loveliness. The conventionally ugly occurs in his poems as frequently as the conventionally beautiful. Donne's poetry is not specialized in the sense that poetry made up of the "poetic" is specialized. However when he does define beauty he says:

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 11. 43-45.

²⁰J. S. Harrison, *Platonism in English Poetry*, p. 112.

²¹11. 67-87.

²²Grierson, I, p. 239, l. 250.

"But beauties other second Element,
 Colour, and lustre now, is as neere spent.
 And had the world his just proportion,
 Were it a ring still, yet the stone is gone."¹⁶

The first "element" is the elaborately lamented Elizabeth Drury.

It is a curious and illuminating fact that Donne rarely describes the beauty of his mistresses. One would gather from a reading of the love poems that the ladies whose favors he enjoyed were blessed with erudition, imagination, wit, sympathy, understanding, daring, sensuality, tenderness, impressionability, and physical normality. But if they were paragons of beauty, the poet was not impressed with the fact. Donne did not love a Goddess, and he appreciated womanliness. *The Anniversaries* are the exception,¹⁷ and there are no descriptive passages even here. Apparently the poet intended to convey the idea that Elizabeth Drury was a paragon, but he himself stated that he intended by her the idea of womankind.¹⁸ Actually, they are observations on the excessive individualism of his age, the breaking down of the Ptolemaic system, death, and celestial joys. The celebration of the lady is purely a framework for the succession of verse-essays.

The principal Neo-Platonic theories that emerge in Donne's poetry at rather frequent intervals are the theory of forms and the doctrine of ecstasy. Plotinus taught that the soul through its creative energy shaped the body, and that the soul, in turn, was merely the matter of a higher form. In *An hymne to the Saints and to Marquesse Hamylton* Donne uses this theory in one of his most graceful compliments.

"So sent this body that faire form it wore,
 Unto the spheare of formes, and doth (before
 His soule shall fill up his sepulchrall stone,) Anticipate a Resurrection;
 For, as in his fame, now, his soule is here,
 So, in the forme thereof his bodie's there."¹⁹

Donne refers to the doctrine of ecstasy many times throughout his poetry. Mrs. Simpson has quoted a magnificent passage from the *LXXX Sermons*²⁰ in which he comments on this emotional state in almost scarlet prose.

¹⁶Grierson I, p. 241, ll. 339-342.

¹⁷The verse-letters are also, but these are expressions of flattery, and although mention of love is made in them, they could by no means be called love poems.

¹⁸*Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond*, p. 3.

¹⁹Grierson I, p. 289, ll. 25-29.

²⁰*A study of the Prose Works*, p. 107.

I shall finde my self, and all my sins enterred, and entombed in his wounds, and like a Lily in Paradise, out of red earth, I shall see my soule rise out of his blode, in a candor, and in an innocence, contracted there, acceptable in the sight of the Father.

Ecstasy was the state attained in the sanctuary when the soul escaped from the body and won a vision of the Ultimate; it was the desire of the soul to merge with God. It can be seen that neither of these doctrines is essential to the modification of Neo-Platonism that was fashionable in Renaissance England and both were accepted by Aquinas.

Donne, who applied Divinity to courtship, has used this second doctrine as the structure of his most famous poem, perhaps the finest and most typical of the school that he founded. The contrast between the color in the prose quoted above and that in the *Extasie* (drooping violets give its only hue) is in itself a commentary upon the subdued manner of Donne's poetry. In this poem Donne once and for all opposes himself to the Platonic lovers of his day. It is his statement of the relation of body and soul, and an evidence of his normality. Too much has been written about Donne's morbidity and his concern with death. It was a concern common to the men of his generation; Donne employed the convention of melancholy of the Jacobean writers, and undoubtedly he felt it as profoundly as he could feel anything. But his attitude towards living was healthy and vigorous, and no clearer proof could be asked than is contained in the conception of love expressed as a doctrine in *The Extasie*.²¹ As this poem contains

²¹Mr. J. S. Harrison in *Platonism in English Poetry* discusses Donne as a Platonist in the Renaissance conception of the word. The sections in which he treats of Donne are so self-contradictory and unorganized that it is difficult to put them in order for controversion in the brief space appropriate to his conclusions. He opens his discussion of *The Extasie* by characterising the love that such poets as Donne were concerned with: "The chief trait of this kind of love is that it concerns only the soul" (p. 141). Then he states that this passion is the subject of *The Extasie*. He concludes his description of the poem with: "Even when the passion descends from this height to the plane of human affections there is no essential change in the purity of the love." "The plane of human affections" is simply sexual intercourse. Mr. Harrison gives as another aspect of "this purely spiritual love", its powers of overcoming time and space. He quotes as an illustration *Soules joy*, which is ascribed to the Earl of Pembroke by Mr. Grierson in Vol. II, pp. cxxxv and cxxxvi of his edition of the poems. Mr. Grierson will not admit it to the canon, and gives as one reason: "Donne never writes of absence in this cheerful confident strain." It is true that *The Valediction forbidding Mourning* upholds Mr. Harrison's contention, but another poem on the same subject, *The Blossome*, is an ironic commentary on Mr. Harrison's argument. Here the poet addresses his heart remonstratingly for remaining with the lady while he is away on a journey.

Donne's most complete declaration of the nature of love, and of the part taken by soul and by body in that passion, nothing could summarize Donne's thought on the subject better than an analysis of it. In this way Donne's points of similiarity to the English Platonists of his age can be seen and the points of departure designated. The writer fully appreciates the stupidity of prosing a poem at length when the reader can study for himself the words of the poet, but, in view of the considerations given above, and the frequent misunderstanding that the poem apparently causes, he feels that the rewriting will be of value.

This poem has been variously interpreted, sometimes in a strange and inscrutable fashion. Two divergent interpretations are those of Mr. Harrison and M. Legouis. It has been seen that Mr. Harrison conceives of *The Extasie* as a love poem concerned with the soul alone. M. Legouis, on the contrary, reads into it a drama between a simple, innocent lady and a learned, subtle, designing seducer. The writer repudiates both ideas and believes

"Well then, stay here; but know,
When thou hast stayd and done thy most;
A naked thinking heart, that makes no show,
Is to a woman, but a kinde of Ghost;
How shall shee know my heart; or having none,
Know thee for one?
Practise may make her know some other part,
But take my word, shee doth not know a heart.
(Grierson I, p. 60, ll. 25-32.)

The poet concludes by advising his heart to meet him at London in twenty days. There it will see him in fine health and high spirits.

"For Gods sake, if you can, be you so too:
I would give you
There, to another friend, whome wee shall finde
As glad to have my body, as my minde."
(Grierson I, ll. 37-40.)

Following this, Mr. Harrison quotes at some length from a verse letter, *To the Countesse of Huntingdon*, in which, according to Mr. Harrison, "he carefully explains how love cannot be desire" (p. 149). Mr. Harrison is correct; Donne is very careful to explain this. One of Mr. Grierson's reasons for excluding it from the canon of Donne's poems explains the explanation. He thinks that it is too familiar in tone to have been addressed by Donne to one so far above him in rank. Mr. Grierson considers it "a letter in a very thinly disguised tone of amatory compliment." Mr. Heyward includes it as an authentic poem, however. Mr. Harrison finds *Love's Growth* a statement that the poet's love is "one and unelemented" (p. 152), and in this poem occurs that fine irony:

"Love's not so pure, and abstract, as they use
To say, which have no Mistresse, but their Muse"
(Grierson I, p. 33, ll. 11-12.)

Mr. Harrison very aptly quotes from *Negative Love* and could have added *The*

it to be a learned and intricate discussion of the importance of the soul and the body as complements in the passion of love. Whether the poem was addressed to Ann More, or the wife of a citizen of London, or a lady of the court, or a lady of the street is beside the question. There is no doubt that love is the passion under discussion in the poem, and the poet does not take us into his confidence, nor tell us whether it is an illicit love or one that would meet with the approval of the scholars who have investigated the matter.

The lovers are sitting upon a bank or hillock of violets, hands clasped and eyes fastened together in mutual regard. The emotion of courtship is of the intense kind in which the hands perspire and sight itself is of a tactile nature.²² So far the joining of hands is their only physical contact and the reflections in their eyes their only offspring.²³ Now they are lying prostrate like statues and their souls have slipped from their bodies and are suspended between them, negotiating their love.²⁴ All day they remain thus,

undertaking to support his statements. In conclusion Mr. Harrison discusses what he believes to be Donne's attitude towards woman: "he was interested in her, not as a personality, but as an idea" (p. 163). In connection with this, see *Elegies* I, IV, VII, XIV, XVI. Mrs. Simpson says that "Donne theoretically despised women as a sex but in practise he loved and honoured individual women" (*A Study of the Prose Works*, p. 63). Mr. Harrison discusses another verse letter to the Countesse of Huntingdon ("Man to God's image"), as an example of the poet's idea of womankind. Mr. Harrison, from a reading of this poem, or from something, concludes that "Woman is identified with virtue; she is the source of all virtue in the world, others being virtuous only by participating in her virtue" (p. 163). Two generalizations from that poem on the subject of woman are sufficient:

"In woman so perchance milde innocence
A seldome comet is, but active good
A miracle, which reason scapes, and sense"
(*Ibid.*, p. 201, ll. 9-11.)

"Then we might feare that virtue, since she fell
So low as woman, should be neare her end."
(*Grierson* I, p. 201, ll. 19-20.)

Mr. Harrison concludes: "Holding thus to this idea of woman, and striving to differentiate love from passion, Donne was able to confine his notion of love to the soul" (p. 165). Did Mr. Harrison ever read Donne's *Elegies*? "Full nakedness! All joyes are due to thee" (*Ibid.*, *Elgie XIX*, p. 121, l. 33). To conclude with oft-quoted lines, Donne held "to this idea of woman":

"Hope not for minde in women: at their best
Sweetnesse and wit, they are but mummy, possest."
(*Ibid.*, *Loves Alchymie*, p. 40, ll. 23-24.)

²²*Grierson* I, *The Extasie*, p. 51, ll. 1-8.

²³*Ibid.*, II, 9-12.

²⁴*Ibid.*, II, 13-17.

silently.²⁶ If someone, standing at a proper distance, could understand the tongue of souls, and were sufficiently etherialized by love, although he could not distinguish the speakers, so much are they one in word and meaning, he might leave with a purer mind merely because he had been an auditor.²⁷ By virtue of this ecstasy a new insight is gained, and they understand the purely spiritual meaning of their love; sex is non-existent to them.²⁸ Their souls mingle through their love and become a compound, one of the other, just as a single soul is a compound unaware of the elements composing it.²⁹ Just as the transplanting of violets strengthens each single one and multiplies it, so has this ecstatic merging of souls dispelled the defect of loneliness that the weak isolated souls had suffered.³⁰ They, the new soul, can know that they are composed of two souls, for, being souls, the parts that compose them are not subject to mutation and retain their identity.³¹ The lover laments that they have neglected their bodies so long and kept them divided.³² They are related to the souls as a sphere is related to the intelligence that dominates it, and gratitude is owed the flesh, because it, through its powers of movement and sense, has brought them together; it is alloy to the gold of souls, not dross.³³ As the stars must pass their influence through atmosphere before they can affect human life, so souls may flow into each other, although they must have recourse to bodies first.³⁴ Pure lovers must descend to the affections and to the faculties of the body, apprehensible to the senses,³⁵ if man, the unit, is to be given freedom, as the blood endeavors to create spirits, ties that unite body and soul, resembling souls as much as possible, because the semi-corporal medium of spirit, by uniting the soul with the

²⁶Grierson I, *The Extasie*, p. 51, ll. 18-20.

²⁷*Ibid.*, ll. 21-28.

²⁸*Ibid.*, ll. 29-32.

²⁹*Ibid.*, ll. 33-36.

³⁰*Ibid.*, ll. 37-44.

³¹Grierson I, *The Extasie*, p. 51, ll. 45-48.

³²*Ibid.*, 49-50.

³³*Ibid.*, ll. 51-56.

³⁴*Ibid.*, ll. 57-60.

³⁵See The Second Anniversarie, Grierson I, pp. 259-260, ll. 296-298.

Thou shalt not peepe through lattices of eyes,
Nor heare through Labyrinths of eares, nor learne
By circuit, or collection to discern.³⁶

³⁶*Ibid.*, ll. 69-72.

body, makes the unit man.²⁶ Thus let lover and beloved turn to their bodies so that weak men may see love revealed. The mysteries of love grow in souls, but must be read in the body.²⁷ And, if any great lover, such as they, has heard this dialogue that their united soul has spoken, he will find them but little changed when they seek each other in physical desire.²⁸ The inner meaning of Donne's thought, here, is the necessity of the functions of both soul and body for complete love.²⁹ Its method is the psychological

²⁶Grierson I, *The Extasie*, p. 53, ll. 61-68.

²⁷*Ibid.*, ll. 69-72.

²⁸*Ibid.*, ll. 73-76.

²⁹In *Donne the Craftsman* (pp. 61-71) M. Legouis has created a most amazing interpretation of *The Extasie* with praiseworthy ingenuity. He thinks of it as a little drama between a simple, innocent woman and a clever, hypocritical seducer, a sort of melodrama of the Victorian age, in which the pure country damsel is betrayed by the subtle city slicker; only, alas, there is no one to succor her. It is difficult to believe that the poet intended such a meaning to be drawn from the poem. M. Legouis has read the reactions of the "heroine" between the lines. However he says: "The heroine remains indeed for the reader to shape, but the hero stands before us, self-revealed in his hypocritical game." This game, according to the critic, is the winning of the woman he desires. M. Legouis does not feel that "this is one of the most important of the lyrics as a statement of Donne's metaphysic of love, of the interconnexion and mutual dependence of body and soul"; the quotation is from Mr. Grierson's commentary on the poem (II, p. 41). It is M. Legouis' belief that "If truth exists here, it is the truth that we find in the speeches of Moliere's Don Juan, who can call on Heaven when convenient and cloak his wicked designs in religious cant, the truth of the playwright who holds up the mirror to human nature."

Space does not permit a detailed refutation of M. Legouis. His principal errors are those of taste and judgment, as serious errors as a critic can commit. M. Legouis' "overstatements" for which he apologizes in his conclusion have undoubtedly assisted in befogging his mind on the subject of this poem, but the principal cause of error lies in these three things: 1. M. Legouis has injected his personal morality into the discussion; 2. he has struggled to force *The Extasie* into the pigeon-hole of dramatic monologue; 3. he has forgotten that it was possible for Donne to have another Platonism than that with which the court played or of which the Petrarchans wrote. The writer will take these up in their order. First, M. Legouis has found the conclusion of the poem coarse. Since the conclusion of the poem is the application of the logic, M. Legouis would find the conclusions of the logic repellent. Or perhaps he does not object to the theory; he does not like the practise. He admits that "If Donne had stated his disinterested views on the subject they would have been very much those which Professor Grierson describes; I only question his having done so in *The Extasie*." But why is M. Legouis making an exception of *The Extasie*? If he has reasons, he does not disclose them in his study of Donne. M. Legouis does not want to believe that Donne states here "the mutual dependence of body and soul" because, evidently, that is not what M. Legouis believes. It is the personal morality of M. Legouis that intrudes at this point. The question of what composes this personal morality is impertinent to the subject of Donne's poetry, however interesting it may be in itself. Nowhere is there a clearer example of the fallacies the critic is subject to when permitting his ideas of social niceties or his moral approval or disapproval (moral in the narrow sense of sexual morality) to color his judgment. Too many critics have displayed a strange extravagance on this matter of coarseness in poetry. It is indeed a lamentable and outrageous fault in a writer, this

method, and it is a picture, in the form of persuasion, of the emotions a lover feels in the presence of his beloved during courtship, when consummation seems possible to him. A close similarity to this emotion can be seen in a passage in *The Courtier*, a passage from a speech that has been seen as a source of Platonism in the sonnets of Shakespeare. M. Pietro Bembo is speaking.⁶⁰

Therefore the woman to please her good lover, beside the graunting him mery countenances, familiar and secret talke, jeasting, daiying, hand in hand, may also lawfully and without blame come to kissing; which in sensual love according to the Lord Julians rules, is not lawfull. For since a kisse is a knitting together both of bodie and soul, it is to bee feared lest the sensuall lover will be more enclined to the part of the bodie, than of the soul: but the reasonable lover wateth well, that although the mouth be a parcell of the bodie, yet is it an issue for the wordes, that be the interpreters of the soule, and for the inwarde breath, which is also called the soule.

And therefore hath a delite to joyne his mouth with the woman beloved with a kisse: not to stir him to any dishonest

coarseness; but still, one should accustom oneself to the company of men. Secondly, M. Legouis believes that Donne intended to write in this poem "the particular case of a couple who have been playing at Platonic love, sincerely enough on the woman's part, and imagines how they would pass from it to carnal enjoyment." A study of the *Elegies*, it would seem, would dispell the idea from the critic's mind that Donne was trying to hold "up the mirror to human nature" in this way. M. Legouis has by no means convinced this reader that *The Extasie* has sufficient action or other dramatic elements to warrant his classification. Even if it is an ironic poem, the manner is of such a personal nature that it is doubtful that an objective situation was meant by it. But the tone of *The Extasie* is by no means ironic (and Donne's irony is never so delicately shaded that recognition is as difficult as it would be in this case); also, Donne would not ridicule his own ideas on the subject of love, ideas that M. Legouis himself has admitted were probably those Donne held. Certainly *The Extasie* is not a little play between two court Platonists. The inner form is not genuinely dramatic. It is an example of "anatomizing". Donne is applying the psychological method to an analysis of the passions, the real secret of a great many of Donne's poems and the reason so many critics think of him as a self-tormenting, introspective being inclined towards morbidity. *The Extasie* has the verisimilitude of a genuine emotional experience, probably of many such experiences, written in the form of a trope. Finally M. Legouis seems to have forgotten that Donne could have absorbed Platonic elements from his reading that were different from those the Petrarchans held. The Platonic elements in the poem have evidently confused the critic. It is the purpose of this work to prove that Donne held Platonic views that were so modified that they permitted such a departure as the thought in *The Extasie* is from the current Platonic beliefs, views that are identical with those of *The Extasie*. M. Legouis admits that Donne may have had those views. He has overlooked the fact that such views could have existed in Donne's mind even in the language of Platonism.

⁶⁰*The Book of the Courtier* by Castiglione. Translated by Sir Thos. Hoby (Everyman's edition) p. 315.

desire, but because hee feeleth that that bonde is the opening of an entrie to the soules, which drawne with a coveting the one of the other, poure them selves by turne the one into the others bodie, and bee so mingled together that each of them hath two soules.

And one alone so framed of them both ruleth (in a manner) two bodies. Whereupon a kisse may be saide to be rather a coupling together of the soule, than of the body, because it hath such force in her, that it draweth her unto it, and (as it were) separateth her from the bodie.

Donne is what M. Bembo would call a "sensuall lover", or, what we might call, a realistic one. He goes so far in Neo-Platonic doctrine, and then adruptly diverges, and this separates him all the more from the Petrarchans.

In *The Extasie*, the concentration of the poem can be found in these beautiful and celebrated lines:

"Loves mysteries in soules doe grow,
But yet the body is his book":

or:

"So must pure lovers soules descend
T'affections, and to faculties,
Which sense may reach and apprehend,
Else a great Prince in prison lies."

In another poem written at a later date, when Donne had definitely matured, a statement of the relation of soul and body is made in a different sense, as the age of the poet and the one for whom the poem was intended dictated. The verse letter, *To the Countess of Bedford* ("T'have written then") contains a long passage on this "mutual dependence".⁴¹ Here Donne shows how the mind can be too much submerged in corporal affairs:

"As dead low earth eclipses and controules
The quick high Moon: so doth the body, Soules."⁴²

He proceeds by saying that in no creature but man are found instruments of such a dual nature as hands, that are to be used both in labor and in prayer; whoever neglects one of these functions neglects, half, and thus performs nothing. (Both body and soul have their functions and who denies either denies all, because both are necessary for the whole man.) As good seed degenerates in bad

⁴¹Grierson I, pp. 196-197, II. 37-70.

⁴²*Ibid.*, II. 41-42.

soil so does the mind's thought when transplanted into the body. The attitude of the poet changes at this point, and he considers the injury possible to the body through the soul. "What hate could hurt our bodies like our love", he says. It is well to remember here the Patristic doctrine that bodies did not sin, but were injured by sinful souls. The dignity of the body as the temple of the soul is removed by the immersion of soul into the corporal. Bodies shall be redeemed from death in the resurrection, while souls are merely preserved for immortality, not immortal by nature.⁴³ Mr. Grierson's comment on this passage throws light on the Platonic elements in Donne.

"Thus the deepest thought of Donne's poetry, his love poetry and his religious poetry, emerges here again. He will not accept the antithesis between soul and body. The dignity of the body is hardly less than that of the soul. But we can not exalt the body at the expense of the soul. If we immerse the soul in the body it is not the soul alone which suffers but the body also. In the highest spiritual life, as in the fullest and most perfect love, body and soul are complimentary, are merged in each other; and after death the life of the soul is in some measure incomplete, the end for which it was created is not obtained until it is reunited to the body."⁴⁴

And it is just in this way that Donne separated himself from the English Neo-Platonists of the Renaissance on the subject of the relation of soul and body.

Finally, in a letter to a very dear friend Donne specifically asserts his attitude towards this same subject.

"You (I think) and I am much of one sect in the Philosophy of love; which though it be directed upon the minde, doth inhere in the body, and finds piety entertainment there: so have Letters for their principall office, to be seals and testimonies of mutuall affection, but the materialls and fuell of them should be a confident and mutuall communicating of those things which we know."⁴⁵

Thus Donne, it seems differed from the English Neo-Platonists

⁴³The writer has based this paragraph on Mr. Grierson's commentary, Vol. II, p. 161. Mr. Grierson has quoted from a sermon that restates this conception that the body has been dignified by a glorious redemption, whereas the soul is immortal by God's will merely, and does not partake of immortality by its nature, immortality by nature being an attribute of God alone.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*

⁴⁵*Letters to severall Persons of Honour*, pp. 104-105.

in the absence of an aesthetic basis for his ethics and in the high position he gives the body in love as well as in theology. There are Platonic elements in his poetry, but they seem to derive from his study of the Scholastic writers rather than from Hoby, or Ficino, or the other sources of Neo-Platonic thought among Englishmen of his age. If he did study those works he rejected their conclusions, and retained only those elements that he could have gotten from medieval sources.

by Richard Thoma

MISS VICTORIA REGIA, BRAZILIAN EXPATRIATE

Miss Victoria Regia, wrapped in seagreen furs,
came from Brazil, with her hothouse atmosphere,
overblown, bursting with seed, to seduce Paris after Rio.
Gaily, she floated in a warm pool, under glass,
perverted, pink, languid at noon, fleshy and bloated,
before the open admiration of the faded boulevardiers.

They photographed her afloat, asleep and abed,
procreating with the bloodless brass of the gallant's stare,
but none approached her, no one swam at her side,
no one put his hands upon her petalled cheeks—
Till Miss Victoria Regia blew herself up and up and up
into Aphrodite, into Astarte, into Babylon herself
and burst at last, casting her seed like a pod
before the admiring gaze of the faded boulevardiers.

by Frederick Hard

PRINCELIE PALLACES

SPENSER AND ELIZABETHAN ARCHITECTURE

*High towers, faire temples, goodly theaters,
Strong walls, rich porches, princelie pallaces,
Large streets, brave houses, sacred sepulchers,
Sure gates, sweete gardens, stately galleries,
Wrought with faire pillours, and fine imageries . . .*

—SPENSER'S *The Ruines of Time*.

IN the history of English architecture the date of Elizabeth's accession marks the middle of a transitional period; for the great age of Gothic had closed with the erection of King's College Chapel, Cambridge, in 1532, and it was not until the beginning of the seventeenth century that Inigo Jones and his followers impressed the Palladian style upon English building. Although this transitional period was marked by an almost complete cessation of activity in the erection of ecclesiastical and secular public buildings (the only structure of any considerable importance being Sir Thomas Gresham's Royal Exchange, 1566-1570), there was yet a remarkable increase in the number of great houses. It is in this kind of building that Elizabethan ideals of architecture were expressed.

These great houses, unlike the castle of the medieval lord, were built for pleasure rather than for security; and the desire for magnificence was everywhere manifest. Among the most notable of the structures erected during, or within a few years of, Elizabeth's reign were these: Burghley House (1556), Charlecote House (1558), Longleat (1567-'80), Nonesuch Palace (1567), Montecute House (1580), Knole (remodeled), Penshurst (remodeled), Haddon Hall (remodeled), Cobham Hall (remodeled), Longford

Castle (1580), Wollaton Hall (1580), and Theobalds (1564-1588).¹

Some of the characteristic features of the great house, as pointed out by Mr. Gotch, are worth mentioning: the elaborate gate house with its porter's lodge; the great hall, or central room; the long gallery; numerous rooms for guests and retainers; a great amount of window space, which feature drew Bacon's remark, "You shall have sometimes faire Houses so full of Glasse, that one cannot tell where to become to be out of Sun or Cold", and Sir Henry Wotton's advice not to "make a House (though but for Civill use) all Eys, like Argus." Among the external features were elaborate chimneys, classic pilasters, decorated cornices, pierced parapets, gables, clocks, turrets, and towers. Interior decoration was even more ornate. Elaborate panelling adorned the walls, intricate designs carved in wood or moulded in plaster covered the ceilings; stairways, mantelpieces, andirons, screens, and almost every object of furniture were ornamented to the highest degree.

To modern eyes these buildings appear over-elaborate, exuberant, and fantastic; we deplore the incongruous mixture of Flemish, Classic, and Italian details grafted upon an English structure. Or at best, we look upon them as picturesque curiosities of a bygone day. Not so the Elizabethan. He saw them as noble houses, spacious and magnificent, reflecting qualities which he admired: a love of show, a vigor of mind, and an abundance of imagination and fancy. Courtiers like Sackville, Burghley, Leicester, Raleigh, and Essex built them, lived in them, and were proud of them. It would be strange if court poets like Spenser did not admire them also. It should be remembered that "city architecture", as we know it, was not yet important to the Elizabethans, who were chiefly occupied with great houses and country estates. It was Inigo Jones and Wren, in the next century, who both provoked and satisfied the taste for new architectural features in London buildings. Notice, however, that in the *Prothalamion* (in a passage that especially appealed to Charles Lamb, citizen of London) Spenser makes reference to the Middle Temple, "where now the studious laywers have their bowers", and to Leicester House, a high-towered, stately place, at that time the residence of the noble Essex.

From another angle, moreover, we should expect the poets of the

¹J. A. Gotch, *Early Renaissance Architecture in England*, (Lond., 1914).

English Renaissance, with their pride in the appellation of "Learned Poete," to be interested in the subject; for architecture was regarded as one of the learned arts, and deserved attention of both scholars and travellers. This latter point has been emphasized by Mr. Lewis Einstein who, in his *Italian Influence on the English Renaissance*, goes so far as to say that "Architecture was then the only art really noticed by English travellers, perhaps because of its learned side." Vitruvius was known in England, and Englishmen themselves were not without writers on the subject. Andrew Boorde's *The boke for to lerne a man to be wyse in buyld- yng of his house*, 1540(?), was one of the first examples. The same writer devotes the first five chapters of his *Compendyous Regyment or a Dyetary of Helth* to the first principles of building. A more pretentious work is the *Chief Groundes of Architecture* (1563), by John Shute. The author, who has travelled in Italy, writes from both learning and experience. In his dedication to Queen Elizabeth, in his address to the reader, and in his discourse upon the history of architecture, he repeatedly stresses the learned aspect of his art. Thus, in his Address to the Reader, he appeals to the memory of Plato, Aristotle, Pliny, Alexander Magnus, Julius Caesar, and others, as examples of "divers learned Philosophers and famous princes" who embraced architecture and were "excellent therein." Shute's requirements for the intellectual equipment of the architect were rather high. "He which wold be an expert Architecte, ought to have all the sciences and knowledges," says Shute, and he particularizes upon grammar, drawing, optics, arithmetic, music, history, astronomy, and philosophy. (I quote from the facsimile reprint edited by Lawrence Weaver, London, 1912). In 1598 Richard Haydocke published a translation of Lomazzo's *Trattato dell' arte della pittura*, naming his book *A Tracte containing the Artes of curious Paintinge, Carvinge, and Buildinge*, since he proposed to add a section on architecture. In his address to the reader he refers to the years he has spent in reading the most learned authors on the subject. Unfortunately the section on architecture, if it was ever printed, is now lost. In the province of Bacon's knowledge architecture was to have a specific place, as he proposes in the *Parasceve* to write a "History of Architecture generally." His essay *Of Building* is, of course, well known for its treatment of contemporary architecture. Sir

Henry Wotton's *Elements of Architecture*, although not published until 1624, expresses ideas which must long have been current in England. In the very first words of his preface the author says, "I shall not need (like the most part of writers) to celebrate the subject which I deliver; in this point I am at ease. For Architecture can want no commendation where there are Noble Men or Noble Mindes." If we bear in mind the courtly audience to which Sidney addressed his *Arcadia*, it is interesting to observe that Pyrocles touches upon architecture as a fashionable intellectual interest, in a bit of sophistry by way of an excuse to come into the presence of Philoclea, whose portrait he has seen: "Desirous I was to see the place where she remained, as though the Architecture of the lodges would have been much for my learning; but more desirous to see her selfe, to be judge, forsooth, of the painter's cunning." Ben Jonson pokes fun at an affectation of architectural knowledge and taste. In the *Poetaster* (Act II, Sc. 1.) Crispinus addresses Horace as they walk along:

By Phoebus, here's a most neate fine street, is't not? I protest to thee
I am enamour'd of this street . . . 'tis so polite and terse! There's the
front of a building now. I study architecture too; if ever I should build
I'de have a house just of that *prospective*.

A few lines later we find current architectural terms applied to a lady's head-dress: "I affect not these high gable-ends, these Tuscan-tops, nor your arches, nor your coronets, nor your pyramids."

Thus we see that architecture, both as a matter of academic concern and of fashionable accomplishment, was receiving attention from Elizabethan courtiers, scholars, and poets. Indeed, a poet who wished to contemplate extravagant and "fantastic" structures had only to look about him; his most transcendent imaginings could almost be matched on the green earth of England. For example, two curious lodges were built by a Catholic squire, Sir Thomas Tresham. One, a lodge at Rushton, illustrates the trinity, and is arranged throughout in groups of three. There are three sides, three floors, three windows to each floor, three gables to each front, and each gable is an equilateral triangle. The other, a building at Lyvedon, Northamptonshire, is cruciform. On one of the cornices that make a circuit of the building outside are displayed seven sets of emblems of the Passion, repeated in ro-

tation, and on another is a series of appropriate sentences in Latin.³ Sir Thomas Gorges built Longford Castle (1580) in a triangular shape, each side being made up of a series of rooms and leaving a triangular court in the middle. The ingenious Elizabethan architect, John Thorpe, left drawings for other three-sided houses, six-sided houses, squares and crosses in circles, and so on. One can almost conceive of his tackling the geometrical subtleties of another Castle of Alma.⁴ In his sober *Description of England*,

Truely a place for pleasantnes, not unfitte to flatter solitarinesse. . . The Lodge is of a yellow stone, built in the forme of a starre; having round about a garden framed into like points: and beyond the gardein, ridings cut out, each aunswering to Angles of the Lodge: at the end of one of them is the other smaller Lodge, but of like fashion; where the gracious Pamela liveth: so that the Lodge seemeth not unlike a faire Comete, whose taile stretcheth it selfe to a starre of lesse greatnes.

Harrison shows some concern about these "manie goodlie houses erected in sundrie quarters of this island . . . rather curious to the eie, like paper worke, than substantiall for continuance." And that chronic complainer, the author of the *Anatomie of Abuses*, exclaims against those who "build gorgeous houses, sumteous edefices, and stately turrettes," and "keepe a porte like mightie potentates." This English virtuosity also attracted the comments of foreign visitors, such as are to be found in the dispatches preserved in the calendars of state papers. The German traveller Hentzner writes thus of Nonesuch Palace:

Nonesuch . . . chosen by Henry VIII for his pleasure and retirement, and built by him with an excess of magnificence and elegance, even to ostentation; one would imagine everything that architecture can perform to have been employed in this work; there are everywhere so many statues that seem to breathe, so many miracles of consummate art, so many casts that rival even the perfection of Roman antiquity, that it may well claim and justify the name of Nonesuch, being without an equal; or as the Poet sung:

This which no equal has in art or fame
Britons deservedly do Nonesuch name.

The same writer comments on the brilliance of decoration at Wind-

³J. A. Gotch, *Old English Houses*, (London, 1926), pp. 104-105.

⁴Even Sidney, whose taste in architecture one might expect to be comparatively restrained, gives us this description of Kalander's lodge:

sor Castle, where there is a gallery "everywhere ornamented with Emblems and figures."

On the North side are the royal apartments, consisting of magnificent chambers, halls, and stoverooms, and a private chapel, the roof of which is embellished with golden roses and fleur-de-lis.

Hentzner finds Hampton Court resplendent with rich tapestries, paintings, images, and various *objets d'art*. "In short", says he, "the walls of the palace shine with gold and silver. Here is besides a certain cabinet called Paradise where . . . everything glitters so with silver, gold, and jewels, as to dazzle one's eyes." Descriptions of this kind may be multiplied by consulting the accounts of other travellers, such as are to be found in W. B. Rye's *England as Seen by Foreigners*, (London, 1865).

In his poem *To Penshurst* Ben Jonson, characteristically impatient with romantic extravagance, implies a protest against the fashionable in contemporary architecture, using the method of contrast:

Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show
Of touch or marble; nor canst boast a row
Of polish'd pillars, or a roof of gold:
Thou hast no lantern, whereof tales are told;
Or stair, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And, these grudg'd at, art reverend the while.
Thou joy'st in better marks—of soil, of air,
Of wood, of water; therein thou art fair . . .

After praising the situation of the house and the nobility and hospitality of the household, the poem concludes:

Now Penshurst, they that will proportion thee
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

Similar ideas are expressed by Thomas Carew, in the seventeenth century, in the poem *To G. N. from Wrest*. Having celebrated the natural beauties of the place, Carew continues:

Such pure and uncompounded beauties bless
This mansion with a useful comeliness
Devoid of art: for here the architect
Did not with curious skill a pile erect
Of carved marble, or tough porphyry,
But built a house for Hospitality;
No sumptuous chimney-piece of shining stone
Invites the stranger's eye to gaze . . .

No Doric or Corinthian pillars grace
With imagery this structure's naked face.
The Lord and Lady of this place delight
Rather to be, in act, than seen in sight.

It is readily seen that both of these poets are out of sympathy with the characteristic Elizabethan flair for sumptuous splendor; and the poems give interesting incidental evidence of the trend from the romantic to the neo-classic in English domestic architecture.

On the other hand, Drayton, a typical Elizabethan if ever there was one, takes a frank delight in the architectural glories of his time, as witness these lines from *Poly-Olbion*, Song XVII, where the progress of the Thames is described:

From where brave Windsor stood on tip-toe to behold
The fair and goodly Thames, so far as ere he could,
With kingly houses crown'd, of more than earthly pride,
Upon his either banks, as he along doth glide.
With wonderful delight doth his long course pursue,
Where Oatlands, Hampton Court, and Richmond he doth view,
Then Westminster the next great Thames doth entertain;
That vaunts her palace large, and her most sumptuous fane:
The land's tribunal seat that challengeth for her's,
The crowning of our kings, their famous sepulchres.
Then goes he on along by that more beauteous strand,
Expressing both the wealth and bravery of the land.
(So many sumptuous bowers, within so little space,
The all-beholding Sun scarce sees in all his race.)
And on by London leads, which like a crescent lies,
Whose windows seem to mock the star-befreckled skies;
Besides her rising spires, so thick themselves that show,
As do the bristling reeds within his banks that grow.

Here is no apology or scorn for the piles erected "with curious skill," but a delighted enthusiasm for wealthy and brave kingly houses.

The foregoing survey, which has sought to summarize from several points of view the stir of architectural interest in Elizabethan England, may serve as an introduction to the main question which I propose to discuss, namely: To what extent does Edmund Spenser, in the treatment of architectural material, share the actual attitude of his contemporaries; or to what degree does he depend upon conventional or traditional literary sources?

II.

The most conspicuous evidence of Spenser's interest in architecture is to be found, of course, in the temples, castles, and palaces described in the poems; and the most important of these are to be found in the *Faerie Queene*: the House of Pride, the House of Temperance, Busyrane's Palace, Castle Joyeous, and the palace of Mercilla. It is true that these buildings are in some respects high-

ly fantastic,—that they contain features, for the expression of allegory and symbolism, which actual buildings may not possess; yet it is a mistake to regard them as mere castles in the air. Careful and deliberate description, with some attention to architectural detail, gives them form and substance, and makes them rise before the mind's eye as real structures. This is not to say that Spenser sets forth a meticulous report of architectural design;

but it is worth observing that Spenser's structures impress us as being far more substantial and orderly than those found in the conventional examples of "literary" architecture. The House of Pride, for instance, symbolical in its situation upon a sandy hill, with its weak parts cunningly painted, is, nevertheless, a high-walled, stately palace, built of brick, possessed of "many loftie towres", "goodlie galleries", "delightful bowres", and is surmounted by a dial or clock.

It was a goodly heape for to behold
And spake the praises of the workmans wit.
(*Faerie Queene*, I. iv. 4 ff.)

Even the Castle of Alma, most symbolical of all in its attempt to allegorize the body, contains features which are realistic enough, with its "hewen stone" porch, its great bulwarks, portcullis, bar-bican, stately hall, goodly parlor, and enormous kitchen,

a vault ybuilt for great dispenche,
With many raunges reard along the wall;
And one great chimney, whose long tonnell thence
The smoke forth threw. And in the midst of all
There placed was a caudron wide and tall,
Upon a mighty furnace, burning whot
(*F. Q.* II. ix. 29)

Such a kitchen, as Warton noted, as might be found in one of the Cambridge colleges. Castle Joyeous is depicted as a building of "goodly frame", and "stately port,"

most goodly edifyde
And plaste for pleasure nigh that forrest syde.
(*F. Q.* III. i. 20.)

It is the height of sumptuousness, with a "great chamber" beautifully adorned with golden pillars, bedecked like the palace of a prince, the walls of the inner rooms hung with magnificent tapestries, beyond the state of persons of mean degree. Mercilla's is a "stately pallace of pompous show,"

With many towres, and tarras mounted hye.
And all their tops bright glistering with gold,
That seemed to outshine the dimmed skye.

(*F. Q. V. ix. 21.*)

It has a "most magnificke" porch, and Spenser notices a "screene" against the entrance of the gorgeous presence chamber.

In contrast to the foregoing passages, Spenser gives almost no external form to the House of Busyrane (*F. Q. III. xi. 21 ff.*), which is a castle without gate or porter, but possessing a porch the entrance of which is choked with fire, smoke, and sulphur. The reason for this lack of form is not far to seek. This is altogether an enchanter's house,—a mysterious dwelling conjured from the realms of romance. Spenser's treatment of this castle seems to me to strengthen, by contrast, the impression of reality which some of his other examples convey. Similarly, Cynthia's palace, in the sphere of the moon, (*Mutabilitie, vi. 10*) is

Made of heavns substance, and upheld
With thousand Crystall pillars of huge hight . . .

and the New Jerusalem, shown to Redcrosse by the aged sire Contemplation (*F. Q. I. x. 55*), is

Whose wals and towres were builded high and strong
Of perle and precious stone . . .
a goodly citie

Hence, I think, we may see a clear distinction in Spenser's mind between the purely "supernatural" architectural features, and those which he employs to gain the effect of verisimilitude in his more plausible structures. I shall bring out this point more clearly as we go along.

Two smaller buildings which reflect architectural interest are the Temple of Venus and Isis Church. The former, on a delightful island, is defended by a castle, and is reached only by a beautifully built bridge. Everywhere there are

Goodly workes, and stones of rich assay
Cast into sundry shapes by wondrous skill.

In the inmost temple there are a hundred marble pillars, "all deckt with crowns and chains and girlands gay", supporting a massy roof (*F. Q. IV. x. 5-6, 15, 37*). Isis Church, whose beauty impresses Britomart so strongly "that she thereon could never gaze

her fill", as she wonders at the "workemans passing skill", is a goodly building

Borne uppon stately pillars, all dispred
With shining gold, and arched over hed.
(*F. Q. V. vii. 5*).

In addition to these temples Spenser makes passing reference to other temples of Venus, of Isis, to that of Apollo at Delos, Diana at Ephesus, and to various other temples of Egypt, Greece, and Rome. These I take to be conventional literary allusions which he could have picked up from a hundred sources; consequently they need not detain us.

With regard to architectural detail, we find that Spenser mentions the Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian orders, and that he uses various architectural terms with apparent familiarity, sundry references being made to arches, pendants, pillars, louvres, corbes, posterns, screens, altars, gateways, bowers, antiks (in the Elizabethan sense of the term, meaning border elaboration), steeples, spires, barbicans, portcullises, towers, turrets, bowers, "greate chambers", and galleries. Thus, the access to the Temple of Venus is by means of a

bridge ybuilt in goodly wize,
With curious corbes and pendants graven faire,
And arched all with porches . . .
On stately pillours, fram'd after the Doric guize.
(*F. Q. IV. x. 6*.)

Now the mere acquaintance with these terms need not imply any great grasp upon the principles of architecture, of course; but taken in connection with Spenser's whole attitude it would suggest more than conventional or inherited material. Notice, moreover, that even when not immediately concerned with the actual features of an edifice, Spenser is capable of reaching for an architectural expression to assist him. Thus, the bower of Proteus, at the bottom of the sea, is formed by the action of the waves on rock,

That seems rough Mason's hand with engines keene
Had long while laboured it to engrave.
(*F. Q. III. viii. 37*.)

This sense of the actual is not common among the predecessors of Spenser who might have been expected to influence him in such description. Although various literary sources have been suggested for the architectural creations of Spenser, it is still a ques-

tion whether the poet, in these matters, is merely following literary tradition. Perhaps the most searching study of the subject is by Professor Earle B. Fowler (*Spenser and the Courts of Love*, 1921), who ascribes the architectural influence partly to classic sources but chiefly to the medieval court of love poems. It is, indeed, in medieval literature that we should expect to find likely models for Spenser's buildings. Here the vision of the stately edifice occurs frequently.⁴ It is usually a palace or a temple; but whereas the writers are profuse in their descriptions of interiors, they very rarely suggest anything like a substantial form for the building. Chaucer's most effective description of an exterior is that of the House of Fame:

Al was of stone of beryle,
Bothe castel and the tour,
And eek the halle, and every bour,
Withouten peces or joininges.
But many subtil compassinges,
Babewinnes and pinacles,
Imageries and tabernacles,
I saw; and ful eek of windowes,
As flakes falle in grete snowes . . . etc.

As a rule, one gets a very vague notion of a building itself, the only realistic detail being wall-paintings or hangings, suggested, in some instances, by the decoration of monasteries, churches, or other contemporary buildings. Medieval romances, too, abound in visionary palaces. Five such buildings are to be found in *Huon of Bordeaux* alone. About such structures we notice that: (1) the buildings are fairy palaces which disappear, or are charmed; (2) they are exceedingly gorgeous, supernaturally so; (3) almost no attention is given to the plan or form of the building; (4) conventional formulae are employed, so that the description of one building might be applied with almost equal appropriateness to another. Nor do the architectural descriptions of Ariosto and Tasso appear to aim at much more verisimilitude. Thus, in *Orlando Furioso* (VI. lxxi) we are shown a golden gate, with projecting cornice over a colonnade, overlaid with gems of India, and propped on columns made of one solid diamond. There is also a

⁴Chaucer, *Knights Tale*, *Hous of Fame*, *Parlement of Foules*; the pseudo-Chaucerian *Assembly of Ladies* and *Court of Love*; *Pierce the Plowmans Crede*; *Lydgate, Temple of Glas, Assembly of the Gods*; *Douglas's Palice of Honour*; *Grosetete's Castle of Love*; etc. A continuation of this convention, in the manner of Lydgate, is seen in Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure*.

lofty castle (*O. F. X. lvii-lix*) whose ramparts glow with precious stones, such as were never seen except in heaven above, and which have the property of showing forth a man's virtues or vices. Examples might easily be multiplied. Finally, Spenser may have been slightly influenced by Marot and Du Bellay. Take, for example, one of the sonnets translated from the latter poet, in Spenser's *Visions of Bellay*, beginning,

On high hills top I saw a stately frame . . . etc.

This is obviously a vision, and for Spenser an early one. There is not the slightest hint of reality, for the building is an hundred cubits high, and possesses a hundred diamond pillars, a wall of crystal, a hundred steps of Afrike gold, and a floor of jasper and emerald.

Doubtless Spenser was attracted by the general gorgeousness of such descriptions as I have mentioned, but it is interesting to observe that he is usually free from these characteristically fantastic excesses, and that he often achieves a total effect of substantiality which is almost entirely lacking in these visionary creations.

Anyhow it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that Spenser, along with Drayton, thoroughly approved of the Elizabethan "proud ambitious heaps" grudg'd at by Jonson; and we know that he lavishes upon many of his descriptions the very qualities which were exemplified in contemporary "sumptuous bowers." We have already observed some of the external characteristics of the Elizabethan great house. Notice how Spenser bears them in mind, when depicting his imaginary houses:

High lifted up were many lofty towres
And goodly galleries farre overlaid
Full of faire windows and delightfull bowres:
And on the top a Diall told the timely howres.

(*F. Q. I. iv. 4.*)

Spenser's buildings have porches sustained by stately columns; or secure gateways attended by porters or wardens; the entrance may have a screen; the roof is traced with foliated designs, or it is gilded; the walls are hung with tapestry, or carved with curious emblems; the pinnacled turrets or the terraces are reached by substantial stairways. Altogether, the buildings are convincing. Spenser is proud of them, and he thinks the architect is to be praised, as witness his frequent comments on workmanly skill:

It was a goodly heape . . .
 And spake the praises of the workmans wit.
 (F. Q. I. iv.)
 But O great pittie that no lenger time
 So goodly workmanship should not endure.
 (F. Q. II. ix. 21.)
 O who can tell the prayeses of that makers might!
 (F. Q. II. ix. 46.)

Incidentally, Spenser's appreciation of fine workmanship in the several arts is characteristic. Repeatedly he mentions the "workman's passing skill", the "cunning craftsman's hand", etc. (Compare *F. Q. II. ix. 47*; *III. xii. 20*; *IV. iv. 15, 6-8*; *IV. x. 29, 3-9*; *V. vii. 5*; *V. ix. 27*). In portraying the architectural glories of Verulam, in the *Ruines of Time*, he surely has in mind some of the features upon which his contemporaries prided themselves:

High towers, faire temples, goodly theaters,
 Strong walls, rich porches, princelie pallaces,
 Large streets, brave houses, sacred sepulchers,
 Sure gates, sweete gardens, stately galleries,
 Wrought with faire pilloours, and fine imageries . . .
 (II. 92-96.)

Not only does Spenser give us an impression of typical Elizabethan buildings; he also brings before his reader structures that would be recognized by his contemporaries as having a specific location. (This notwithstanding Lamb's remark that the characters of the *Faerie Queene* "prate not of their whereabouts.") We have already noticed his specific references to Leicester House and to the Middle Temple (once the residence of Raleigh). To these should be added his allusion to London Bridge, in a passage where Britomart relates to Paridell the majesty of Gloriana's city:

It Troynovant is hight, that with the waves
 Of wealthy Thamys washed is along,
 Upon whose stubborne neck, whereat he raves
 With roring rage, and sore himselfe does throng,
 She fastened hath her foot, which standes so hy
 That it a wonder of the world is song
 In forreine landes, and all which passen by,
 Beholding it from far, do thinke it threatens the skye.
 (F. Q. III. ix. 45.)

There is something a little complacent in this celebration of the sky-scraping of London Bridge, surmounted in Spenser's day with tall buildings, which might not unfittingly be compared to a modern New Yorker's pride in the far-famed sky-line. Anyway, Elizabethans vied with each other in praising it. Thus Andrew

Boorde, "... and there is suche a brydge of pulchritudnes, that in all the worlde there is none lyke." Also Drayton, further along in the passage from *Poly-Olbion* previously cited:

... that most costly bridge that doth him most renown,
By which he clearly puts all other rivers down.

And Spenser is quite right in saying that its praises are sung in foreign lands; for the foreign travellers joined in the chorus of praise for this wonderful wonder of wonders; for example, see Thomas Platter's *Englandsfahrt im Jahre 1599*, (ed. Hecht, Halle, 1929).

A somewhat puzzling palace is Spenser's Panthea, referred to twice in the *Faerie Queene*. In the first passage Redcrosse speaks to the aged sire Contemplation, who has shown him the vision of the New Jerusalem:

Till now [says Redcrosse] I weened well
That great Cleopolis, where I have beene
In which that fairest Faerie Queene doth dwell,
The fairest Citie was, that might be seene;
And that bright towre all built of christall cleene,
Panthea, seemd the brightest thing, that was:
But now by prooffe all otherwise I weene;
For this great Citie that does far surpas,
And this bright Angels towre quite dims that towre of glas.

Contemplation replies,

Most trew,
Yet is Cleopolis for earthly frame
The fairest peece, that eye beholden can:
And well beseemes all knights of noble name,
That covet in th' imortall booke of fame
To be eternized, that same to haunt ...

(F. Q. I x. 58-59.)

The second reference occurs in the chronicle of British kings (F. Q. II. x. 73), where it is simply stated that the most renowned Elfant "did Panthea build." Percival, whose view is accepted by Professor Whitman in his *Subject Index to the Poems of Edmund Spenser*, suggested Westminster Abbey, as being a kind of 'Pantheon' enclosing the tombs of Elizabeth's ancestors. Warton, while noticing the "tincture of romantick ideas" in the passage, thought that Windsor Castle was probably meant. At all events, Spenser is here glancing at a contemporary building associated with the court, and no doubt his courtly readers fully understood the allusion.

Another quite incidental allusion, usually regarded as fanciful, seems to me to refer to a contemporary building. It occurs in the description of Mammon's cave:

the rowme was large and wide
As it some Gyeld or solemne Temple weare:
Many great golden pillours did upbeare
The massy rooffe, and riches huge sustayne,
And every pillour decked was full deare
With crownes and Diademes, and titles vaine,
Which mortall Princes wore, whiles they on earth did rayne.
(*F. Q. II. vii. 43*).^{*}

The term "Gyeld" means, of course, "guild hall", and to Londoners of Spenser's time it very probably meant the Guildhall. According to Stow, who follows Fabian, this building was begun in 1441. The great hall was decorated with images of Christ, Law and Learning, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance. It was one of the most prominent buildings in London, being used for official gatherings of various kinds and for public shows, Lord Mayor's pageants, and such spectacles. The great hall was also used as a court room and council chamber.^{*} Both Wyngarde's view

Glo. Go after, after, cousin Buckingham,
The Mayor towards Guildhall hies him in all post.

Buck. I go; and towards three or four o'clock
Look for the news that the Guildhall affords.

of London (c. 1550) and the map by Ralph Agas show the Guildhall, designating it specifically. On Hollar's map (1647) the Guildhall is given particular notice, along with such important buildings as St. Pauls, Bow Church, Allhallows the Great, and the Royal Exchange. No other guild building is noticed in any of these maps. The Guildhall porch, which Spenser could not have failed to see, is described by Price, as follows:

Though subjected to minor alterations from time to time, its chief points of interest are uninjured. These combine two bays of groined vaulting, the walls having deeply recessed, moulded and traceried panelling . . . The vaulting is richly groined . . . *the intersections being enriched with handsome sculptured bosses of heraldic and foliated devices in varied designs, emblazoned and gilt, the two principal bosses bearing the arms of Edward the Confessor and Henry VI.*^{*}

^{*}The device of decorated pillars was familiar in Elizabethan times. Visitors to Penshurst may recall the trophy-hung pillars in the great hall.

^{*}Compare Shakespeare, *Rich. III.* (Act III, Sc. v).

^{*}John Edward Price, *A Descriptive Account of the Guildhall in the City of London*, (Lond., 1886). [The italics are mine.]

Hentzner, observing the building in 1598, remarks:

Here are to be seen the statues of the two giants . . . Corinius of Britain and Gogmagog of Albion. Beneath, upon a table, the *titles of Charles V, Emperor, are written in letters of gold.*¹

The resemblance between the details of these descriptions and the Spenser passage would seem to disprove the idea of mere fantasy in the latter, and to justify its being regarded as a direct and suggestive allusion to a contemporary building.

It is curious and surprising that Spenser makes no mention of the cathedrals of England. We have noticed his references to chapels, altars, and temples, but, like Chaucer before him, he seems quite neglectful of the great Gothic piles which afford us so much delight. Warton thought that there was a reference to the destruction of St. Paul's steeple by lightning, in 1561, in *F. Q.* IV. vi. 14,

Like as the lightning . . .
With dreadfull force falles on some steeple hie
Which battring, downe it on the church doth glance,
And teares it all with terrible mischance.

If so, it is Spenser's only reference to any of the great cathedrals.

III.

The truth seems to be that Spenser was chiefly interested in the magnificent aspects of such architecture as was attracting contemporary favor among persons of rank; although, as I have pointed out elsewhere, he also shows a marked reverence for the ancient houses and castles of the nobility, as well as concern for the neglect of the older palaces. The passage which best demonstrates this attitude is found in *Mother Hubberds Tale*, where the Fox (who represents Lord Burghley) is attacked for his corrupt ministry:

his owne treasure he encreased more
And lifted up his loftie towres thereby,
That they began to threat the neighbor sky;
The whiles the Princes pallaces fell fast
To ruine: (for what thing can ever last?)
And whilest the other Peeres for povertie
Were forst their auncient houses to let lie,
And their old Castles to the ground to fall
Which their forefathers famous over all
Had founded for the Kingdomes ornament,
And for their memories long monument.

(II: 1171-81.)

¹Cited by H. B. Wheatley, *London Past and Present*, (Lond., 1891), II., 171. [My italics.]

It seems clear that in the last few lines of this satirical passage Spenser gives evidence of the cultured Elizabethan feeling that the great houses and castles, rightfully maintained, are proper attributes of true nobility; and that their magnificence is at least one aspect of that "Magnificence", which virtue, as the poet told Sir Walter Raleigh, "is the perfection of all the rest and containeth in it them all."

Purely from the point of view of aesthetic criticism, Spenser's interest in architecture can hardly be said to imply any great significance. Yet his use of the imagery of architecture to illustrate his most serious subjects, not only in the instances cited, but in purely incidental allusions as well, certainly indicates a conviction of the importance, not to say nobility, of the art. Against his indifference to the excellencies or defects of his architectural creations *qua* architecture, must be urged his very apparent intention to make the reader visualize them as actual buildings; and the enthusiasm with which he presents his descriptions implies a sympathy, albeit uncritical, with the art in general.

As to his artistic purposes in employing architectural motifs, it may be remarked that on the one hand he portrays for us buildings whose function it is to convey to the reader the appropriate emotional significance of a given situation. Into this class will come all of the structures which are dominantly allegorical, such as the House of Pride, the Castle of Alma, Busyrane's Palace, and Castle Joyeous. Here, be it said once more, Spenser stands at the meeting-point of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, influenced both by medieval allegory and by the Renaissance feeling for splendor and magnificence. Thus, the emotional appeal in the Castle of Alma is like that of the medieval *Castle of Love*—essentially allegorical; but a certain attention to formal features, as well as the sumptuousness with which it is realistically adorned, speaks a later age, where these qualities carried an appeal on their own account. In this connection it is important to note that Spenser was by no means confined to influences which were strictly literary. Under a second classification may be grouped passages which show Spenser's use of architecture chiefly as a pictorial device, for the purpose of giving either a romantic setting, as in the numerous references to castles, hermitages, cottages, churches,

temples, etc.; or for specific realism of background, as in the passages relating to Mercilla's palace, or the references to the Temple, to Leicester House, or to London Bridge. It is unsafe to be too categorical about many of these allusions, however; symbolism is a prime consideration with Spenser, and it is frequently implied in the most concrete situations.

Except for the allusions in the *Ruines of Rome* and the *Ruines of Time* Spenser cannot be said to share a marked interest in the ruins of antiquity with such later poets as Dyer, Thomson, Byron, and Clough; nor does he partake in the eager delight over medieval ruins with Warton, Gray, and Scott, although his tribute to Camden's antiquarianism should be recalled:

Camden, the nourice of antiquitie,
And lanterne unto late succeeding age,
To see the light of simple veritie
Buried in ruines . . .

(*Ruines of Time*, 169-172.)

Neither is Spenser concerned with the critical point of view, as exhibited superficially by Pope, and earnestly by Clough and Browning. Nowhere, it hardly need be said, does he attempt to convey to us the spirit of deep, reverential enjoyment found in Wordsworth's great sonnets on King's College Chapel. Of the English poets who came after him, Spenser seems nearest in the treatment of architecture to Milton, Shelley, Keats, and Morris, especially in the use of gorgeous decorative material. Yet Spenser's buildings are often more suggestive of substantiality than are many of the fantasies of the later romantics. It is this point that distinguishes him from the builders of mere castles in the air, and adds to our conviction that his structures, though created in the mind,—like the castle Goito, in *Sordello*, or the Bishop's tomb in St. Praxed's church,—are nevertheless suggested by models which had actually been seen and admired.

by Lodwick Hartley

SONG FOR LEAN YEARS

Jalapa Pengrove trod on daisies—
His was a wisdom born of springtime.
Ours is a wisdom born of winter:
Cherish the crocus under the snow.

Surfeit is like an over-drunk fountain
Spilling its silver water softly.
Dearth is a woman with flapping breasts
And a mantle as long as clockless time.

How shall we find for the earth a lover
To sow her with seed and till her anew?
How shall he pluck from heaven a star
To set as a glittering gem on her breast?

Jalapa Pengrove trod on daisies—
His was a wisdom born of springtime.
Ours is a wisdom born of winter:
Cherish the crocus under the snow.

by R. W. Babcock

THE WHITE KNIGHT AS CRITIC

MR. G. WILSON KNIGHT'S CRITICISM OF SHAKESPEARE

"It's my own Invention . . ."

—WHITE KNIGHT

IN THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS.

THE tide is swinging back again. The realistic editors of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century irritated the romantics of the early nineteenth, who in their turn have been derided by the historically-minded sceptics of the twentieth. But we are getting back to the romantics again: Mr. G. Wilson Knight is off on an imaginative interpretation of Shakespeare which echoes nineteenth century Germanic rhapsodies, though Mr. Knight never admits such awful relationships, and which at the same time, curiously enough, picks up some recent twentieth century interpretation only grudgingly recognized by Mr. Knight.¹ Though as Mr. T. S. Eliot pleads in his introduction of this modern romantic's *Wheel of Fire*, "the surrendering ourselves . . . to some system of our own or of some one else is as needful part of a man's life as falling in love", the question is whether we ought to surrender to Mr. Knight's system as quickly, say, as we might fall in love à la Robert Browning. There may be certain difficulties in the way of this complete erotic obeisance.

Mr. Knight's interest in Shakespeare started with a little book—hardly more than a pamphlet—entitled *Myth and Miracle: An Essay on the Mystic Symbolism of Shakespeare*. The title itself indicated the flavor of the critic's preliminary approach. In this text, following the New Hudson chronology of the plays, Mr.

¹*Myth & Miracle: An Essay on the Mystic Symbolism of Shakespeare* (London: Burrow, 1929).

The Wheel of Fire: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Sombre Tragedies (Oxford University Press, 1930.)

The Imperial Theme (Oxford University Press, 1931.)

The Shakespearean Tempest (Oxford University Press, 1932.)

Letters to the *London Times Literary Supplement*, August 15, 1929; February 25, 1932; March 9, 1933.

Knight pointed out that the series of plays from *Julius Caesar* and *Measure for Measure* through *The Tempest* represent a symbolic progress of Shakespeare's soul: in the problem plays there is apprehension of the spiritual versus a Hate-Theme; the tragedies resolve this dualism in death; and the third and last group "explicate the quality of immortality" through loss in tempest and revival to music. In *The Tempest*, the last of the plays, Shakespeare "traces in a compact play the past progress of his own soul", in other words this play sums up all the others. The progress has taken twelve years, and Prospero has been on the island precisely twelve years: *The Tempest* "is a record . . . of all the themes I have discussed in this paper, of the spiritual progress from 1599 or 1600." This is the foundation of Mr. Knight's ideas. He has reduced the plays to some order with relation to his interpretative system. The problem now is to turn to his specific interpretative ideas and reduce them in turn to some sort of order which may be fairly clearly understood. After that it will be time enough to fall, or not to fall, in love with them.

I.

The best place to start on Mr. Knight's ideas seems to be the Introduction to the third book, *The Imperial Theme*. Here the critic points out quite concretely what the poetic symbolism is that he finds in the Shakespearean Progress. There are certain values and negations running through these plays which, taken as a whole, show the unity underlying them all. "By 'values'," he says, "I mean those positive qualities in man, those directions taken by human action, which to the imaginative understanding clearly receive high poetic honours throughout Shakespeare".¹ These are kingship, honor, war, love, and religion. They may appear together in various plays, and they may even conflict—as do love and war in *Antony and Cleopatra*. And they are symbolically represented by imagery involving the sun, moon, stars, flowers, feasting, jewels, fire, music, and so on. Opposed to these values are the negations: hate, evil, death—which form the themes of the sombre plays. Their imagery consists of tempests, disease, beasts, rocks, iron. It is obvious that some imagery can be employed in both meanings: nature, for example, may be negative or idealized

¹*The Imperial Theme*, p. 1.

—the sea can be both tragic and peaceful. But the main opposition which Mr. Knight finally derives from this series is that which he expounds at length in his latest book [*The Shakespearean Tempest*],—namely, the music-tempest opposition." This opposition he now makes the basis of Shakespeare's total unity: "the only principle of unity in Shakespeare." And, (from Mr. Knight's point of view), this unity-idea is important.

Theoretically, the critic's plea for unity is the fundamental excuse for his interpretative method. "In any intellectual study we expect first some principle of unity"; but recent Shakespearean study shows "intellectual chaos". "Personal prejudice" has usurped "imaginative understanding"; if we turn back to "the imaginative solidities of Shakespeare", we shall find unity. And here Mr. Knight becomes rather metaphysical.¹

His point is that we have been too intellectual and ethical in our analysis of Shakespeare. But "Criticism is a judgment [*sic*] of vision; interpretation a reconstruction of vision".² A work of art may demand "an especial intuition which transcends all reasoning" and this special intuition is "concerned only with realities".³ We are quoting mainly from Mr. Knight's first chapter in *The Wheel of Fire*, "On the Principles of Shakespeare Interpretation". A Shakespearean tragedy, he continues, should be viewed in space as well as in time: "there are throughout the play a set of correspondences which relate to each other independently of the time sequence . . . the Death-theme in *Hamlet*, the nightmare Evil of *Macbeth*". He then makes an apt comparison with the contemporary play *Journey's End*, which is constructed against a background of war, as the spatial element: in other words, he asks, what would *Journey's End* be without the war atmosphere within which the actual chronological events move? Shakespeare, however, more closely fuses these two elements, and "this close-fusing of the temporal, that is, the plot-chain of event following event, with the spatial, that is, the omnipresent and mysterious reality brooding motionless over and within the play's movement" is perfectly harmonized in *Troilus and Cressida*, *Measure for*

¹"Now the Shakespearean Tempest is often, and perhaps always if we look deep enough, the conflict of the beast and the angel in man"—p. 106.

²I bid p. 6.

³*The Shakespearean Tempest*, pp. 1 and 3.

⁴*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 2.

⁵*The Shakespearean Tempest*, p. 1.

⁶*The Wheel of Fire*, The successive references are on pp. 8, 3, 5, 10, and 11.

Measure, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear*, but not so well done in *Hamlet* and *Othello*. The fusing appears in the symbolic imagery—there may be even a direct personal symbol such as the ghost (i.e., the Death-theme) in *Hamlet*, and it is the duty of the interpretative critic to point out this imaginative pattern which lies beneath both characters and plot, and thus dissolve the so-called "faults" of Shakespeare in this larger unity.

For Mr. Knight will have nothing to do with mere character evaluation and source-finding. The former, he insists, wrongly lifts the ethical above the imaginative and produces only complex impressions, but "A person in a drama may act in such a way that we are in no sense antagonized but are aware of beauty and supreme interest only; yet the analogy to that same action may well be intolerable to us in actual life". In other words we should use our artistic, not normal, ethic: "interpretation must be meta-physical rather than ethical". Stated in Mr. Knight's more concrete terms of values and negations, Cleopatra, representing life-values "is wholly 'good'" whereas "*Hamlet*, to the imagination, becomes 'evil', unhappy, negative, and dark".⁹ Comparatively speaking, a character is but *part* of a play; a symbol suggests the whole. And as for source-finding, such a procedure will not account for Shakespeare's poetry: the source of *Antony and Cleopatra* is the "erotic imagination of the poet which finds its worthy bride in an old world romance".¹⁰ Sources, he continues, tend too much to dominate our idea of Shakespeare: "when such 'realistic' arguments are directed against an imaginative interpretation, I maintain that we are in danger of committing imaginative suicide".¹¹ You cannot use sources, he declares, unless you can build up an aesthetic philosophy based upon an exact relation between the poet's life adventures and his poetry—"And that philosophy or science will not be readily forthcoming".¹² All of this may be more or less debatable, but rejection of character-analysis and source-finding is certainly consistent with Mr. Knight's mode of approach.

⁹*The Imperial Theme*, p. 24.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 24. The *London Times Literary Supplement* (January 21, 1932) rejects this contrast.

¹¹*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 8.

¹²*The Shakespearian Tempest*, p. 11. Compare his letters to the *London Times Literary Supplement*, August 15, 1929, and February 25, 1932.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 11.

Similarly, also, and quite obviously, the critic has no use for textual and historic-theatrical criticism. He has no sympathy with parceling out of passages "to minor Elizabethan dramatists"¹⁴ and he very seldom, as we shall see later, troubles himself about the textual authenticity of a Shakespearean play, accepting *Pericles*, *Timon of Athens*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Henry VI*, Part III, all of *Macbeth* and *Cymbeline*—almost without reservation. He has no faith in metrical tests and uses an old edition of Shakespeare with never a single reference to the *New Cambridge Shakespeare*. Obviously his interpretative point of view has little connection with cold textual criticism. But his disinterest in historico-theatrical criticism is even more conspicuous: "Nor will a sound knowledge of the stage and the especial theatrical technique of Shakespeare's work render up its imaginative secret . . . it does not tell us why . . . the gigantic architecture of *Timon* came to birth . . . a true philosophical and imaginative interpretation will aim at cutting below the surface to reveal that burning core of mental or spiritual reality from which each play derives its nature and meaning."¹⁵

To sum up, then, Mr. Knight lays down four principles "of right Shakespearean interpretation"¹⁶:

1. We should regard each play "as a visionary unit"; to do this we must "preserve absolute truth to our own imaginative reaction".

2. We should recognize both temporal and spatial elements and be ready to relate any incident or speech to both. We should not expect verisimilitude to life—"but rather see each play as an expanded metaphor". Thus many apparent flaws will be resolved.

3. We should analyze "the use and meaning of direct poetic symbolism . . . Also the minor symbolic imagery of Shakespeare". Neither one is "related to the normal processes of actual life." "Where certain images continually recur in the same associative connexion [*sic*], we can, if we have reason to believe that this associative force is strong enough, be ready to see the presence of the associative value when the images occur alone."

4. The plays from *Julius Caesar* (1599) to *The Tempest* (1611) "fall into a significant sequence. This I have called

¹⁴*Ibid*, p. 4.

¹⁵*The Wheel of Fire*, pp. 14-5.

¹⁶*Ibid*, p. 15. The four appear on pp. 15-6.

'the Shakespearian Progress'." Hence we must relate each play to this sequence. Special notice, also, should be given to the Hate-theme, which runs through most of these plays.

II.

Applied to specific plays these principles evolve something like the following. *Hamlet* has a "central reality of pain". Hamlet's will is snapped and useless, like a broken leg . . . From the first scene to the last the shadow of Death broods over this play . . . Death indeed is the theme of this play, for Hamlet's disease is mental and spiritual death. So far, then, the play represents the negation sequence, but Mr. Knight suddenly adds, "The total impression, the imaginative impact of the whole, leaves us with a sense of gaiety, health"! This is a rather astounding remark in the face of the previous ideas until one realizes that the critic has abruptly shifted to the life values in the play which he does not treat in detail till a subsequent book: it is a pity that both types of essays were not in the same volume. True, a second essay on *Hamlet* in *The Wheel of Fire* hints at this other aspect by applauding Claudius and pointing out the normality of other characters, but the actual defence of the above startling statement does not come till the fourth chapter of *The Imperial Theme*. Here Mr. Knight repeats the life force of the King as evidenced by feasting, good nature, courage, kingliness; and adds Hamlet's honour as a value, Ophelia's love, Laertes' love for Ophelia, and Ophelia's soliloquy on Hamlet's life forces before the play began. But it is quite significant that even in this essay the critic spends ten pages on the Death-theme again: he cannot relinquish the importance of his original interpretation.

Macbeth is discussed in the same way, in the two different books. "*Macbeth* is the apocalypse of Evil". Uncertainty and darkness permeate the play. Macbeth is ignorant of his motive and horrified at the deed. It is all like a nightmare, and "The consciousness of nightmare is a consciousness of absolute Evil". The Evil comes from without; hence "The weird Sisters are thus objectively conceived . . . not . . . phantoms and ghosts", but "in-

¹*The Wheel of Fire*, The questions following may be found on pp. 19, 26, 31, 33, 174, 173, 107, 108, 123, 195, 196, 188, and 192.

dependent entities".¹⁸ But in "*The Imperial Theme* Mr. Knight evolves four life-themes, or values, in *Macbeth*: warrior-honor, imperial magnificence, sleep and feasting, and ideas of creation and nature's innocence. Later even he compares *Macbeth* with *Antony and Cleopatra*, which, as we shall see, contains, according to the critic, the most intense concentration of life themes of all the plays.

Othello is more difficult to interpret symbolically because it "is a story of intrigue rather than a visionary statement". So the critic turns to its style, which has a poetic serenity in contrast "with the passions of men". Its images are detached—we *watch* Othello, but we *are* Lear. Yet Othello's speech once out of control becomes ugly and idiotic; hence, his style as a whole is symbolic: it envisages the conflict in the play itself. Mr. Knight does finally, however, manage to evolve a personal symbolism also; Othello represents the values of love and war, Desdemona love, and Iago the intellectual opposition to these two. "The play turns on this theme: the cynical intellect pitted against a lovable humanity".

Lear is easier to handle (it is from *Lear* that Mr. Knight drew his title for the second book.) "Man's relation to the universe is the theme of *Lear*". If *Macbeth* is Hell and *Antony and Cleopatra* Paradise, *Lear* is Purgatory, from several points of view: (1) the naturalism of the Lear universe, (2) its gods, (3) the "insistent questioning of justice, human and divine", (4) the "stoic acceptance by many persons of their purgatorial pain", and (5) the "flaming course of the Lear theme itself growing out of this dun world". Yet Mr. Knight finds a "comedy of the grotesque" in *Lear*: "there is a humour that treads the brink of tears", which can be used to enhance tragedy. So the grotesque elements contribute to the terrific force of the whole—Gloucester's losing his eyes, the leap from Dover cliff (which the critic calls "the furthest . . . reach of the poet's towering fantasticality"), and Cordelia's death—through them all is "the demonic grin of the incongruous".

Such are Mr. Knight's remarks in *The Wheel of Fire* on the generally accepted four great tragedies, but it is a significant re-

¹⁸*Ibid*, p. 173. In his most recent book (*The Shakespearian Tempest*) Mr. Knight points out that Evil is disharmony between the spiritual and the actual—neither is itself evil. Hecate is a spirit and not evil, but the Weird Sisters are evil—App. B, p. 173.

sult of the critic's interpretative approach that the really greatest play turns out to be *Antony and Cleopatra*, which evokes four essays—really the backbone of *The Imperial Theme*.

Antony and Cleopatra is "probably the subtlest and greatest play in Shakespeare". It "discloses a vision rather universalistic . . . earth, water, air, fire, and music, and . . . visionary humanism." Note the accumulation of life values in that one sentence. The style of the play receives some excellent analysis, which will be noted later, but it may be well now to sum up the values as Mr. Knight derives them from this play. First there is imperial magnificence, as it appears in references to the historical setting and world glory; second, physical love and feasting; third, natural and elemental symbolism such as water, air, fire, the Nile, the sea, etc.; and finally the spiritual love theme, in music and light: "the passion theme as a whole is clearly raised above mere animal desire". Love is "that imperial theme . . . By love's alchemy nature surpasses the finest and farthest reaches of artistic creation". Of course "there is a stern realism too . . . pain, failure, hate, and evil . . . but they are resolved constituent to a wider harmony." In the play "no persons are bad"; that is, there is "no one exponent of any pure negation". All the characters have an ebb and flow of good and bad. The "negation here is disloyalty; the primary excellence, loyalty . . . they are all, at the last, true to their deepest loyalty". Hence "Evil—here, of course disloyalty—is ever melted in the prevailing delight". Two fundamental values are opposed: War or Empire versus Love, and "all die at the height of love or loyalty". Mr. Knight then proceeds to trace the dualism, or conflict, in each individual character, and when he arrives at *Cleopatra*, he declares she is "Shakespeare's most amazing and dazzling personification . . . She has . . . all qualities potential in her . . . She is at once Rosalind, Beatrice, Ophelia, Gertrude, Cressid, Desdemona, Cordelia and Lady Macbeth," but "Love is ever the pivot of her gyrating personality." The play represents the conflict of feminine love and masculine warriorship, and in its conclusion Death is "a better life": "the high metaphysics of love . . . melts life and death into a final oneness." So *Antony and Cleopatra* is the "sun-smitten peak of Shake-

¹⁹*The Imperial Theme*, p. 199. The rest of the quotations in this paragraph are from *The Imperial Theme*, pp. 300-326.

speare's art . . . it is the farthest excelsior of our poet's vision . . . a life-vision . . . a dramatic microcosm of life."

It may be slightly anti-climactic to turn back now to one or two of the less important plays, but such a move will at least lead us a step or two toward a discussion of the flaws inherent in Mr. Knight's philosophic interpretation. *Troilus and Cressida* is "a philosophical argument perfectly bodied into poetry . . . In no play of Shakespeare is there a more powerful unity of idea".²⁰ In *Julius Caesar* the critic finds eroticism: "The *Julius-Caesar* world is fiery-bright with a brilliant erotic vision". . . The imperial theme of mighty Caesar is thus the hub on which revolves a theme of wider scope, imperially crowned with fire of love's radiance."²¹ In *Coriolanus* "Love, after all, rules this metallic world".²² But perhaps most startling of all is the critic's interpretation of *Timon of Athens*: it is "on a scale even more tremendous than that of *Macbeth* and *Lear* . . . In no play of Shakespeare is the opening more significant"²³ . . . In these scenes the Shakespearian poetry takes on a mighty and compulsive rhythm, a throb and pulse unknown in other plays".²⁴ All of which may suggest that Mr. Knight's method seems to be warping his critical vision somewhat.

To sum up briefly this discussion of the individual plays: there are two groups, involving a Hate-theme and an Evil-theme. The first appears in *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Troilus and Cressida*; the second in *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. "'Will,' asserts Mr. Knight, 'clearly finds no place in the passionate world of the great tragedies', for "'Will' is a thing most generally known by its absence, and hence it is fundamentally unreal".²⁵ Shakespeare's three modes of thought are: (1) good is Love; (2) the Hate-theme is "awareness of the world of actuality unspiritualized";²⁶ (3) "Evil is a vision of the Naked Spirit"²⁷—a chasm of 'nothing'—based on the dualistic opposition of actuality and spirit. Thus the critic insists that he gets to

²⁰*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 78.

²¹*The Imperial Theme*, p. 59.

²²*Ibid.*, p. 196.

²³*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 227.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 246.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 285n.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 290.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 290.

"Reality in the widest and profoundest implications of the word"; he is in other words, "transcendental".²

III.

Now the question immediately arises: How much of all this is Mr. Knight and how much Shakespeare? Has the critic picked up more than he admits from previous criticism, and does his system interpret the Elizabethan Shakespeare anyway? Is he justified in casting aside textual, bibliographical, and historical criticism as of no value in solving the poet? Does his system lead to tangential excursions—a curse he lays on historical critics—and is it never self-contradictory? The answers to all these questions will definitely posit Mr. Knight's status as a modern critic of Shakespeare.

Mr. Knight's attitude toward his predecessors has been rather peculiar. At first he ignored them, but in his last two books he has descended nearer earth and admitted some debts. In the Preface to *Myth and Miracle*, his earliest text, he wrote, "The debt of the present essay to the orthodoxies of Shakespeare criticism, past and present, is, I think, slight". The Preface to *The Wheel of Fire* shows a turn toward concession: "I can trace some of the strands in my interpretation directly or indirectly to certain books or essays that I have read or remarks that I have heard . . . the following essays must owe a wider, unconscious obligation, reading back to writings I have long forgotten." Finally in *The Imperial Theme* he comes into the open and in the Preface directly mentions Miss Spurgeon, Mgr. Kolbe, Miss Lily B. Campbell, H. Granville-Barker, J. Dover Wilson, and even Dr. S. A. Tannenbaum: the last two, be it noted, being critics of schools decried by Mr. Knight. In this Preface the critic half apologizes, "In *The Wheel of Fire* I made no attempt at such acknowledgments." One of his chief standbys now is Colin Still's book on *Shakespeare's Mystery Play [The Tempest]*. The next year, (1932), in *The Shakespearian Tempest*, he remarked in his Preface that "my observation and understanding of the tempest-music opposition throughout Shakespeare is, I think, original". But he admits that he got ideas from Miss Spurgeon and Mgr. Kolbe, whose "work . . . seems to me in danger of neglect." Then unfortunately as a

²*Ibid.*, p. 294.

²*Ibid.*, p. 294.

postscript he is forced to add that he has just run across Mr. Cumberland Clark's *Shakespeare and Science*, which discussed Shakespeare's tempests way back in 1929. It is a damaging admission and suggests that in general Mr. Knight's Prefaces do not tell the whole story about his debts to predecessors.

In the books themselves the critic is by no means always consistent in his references to his predecessors. For example he writes, "It is not my desire, here or elsewhere, to attack other critics' interpretations, but merely to present my own."²² Yet in the same book he has no qualms about attacking Mgr. Kolbe.²³ And even worse than this is his vicious thrust at the late Hon. J. M. Robertson in the first chapter of *The Shakespearian Tempest*, where, as noted above, he decries the parcelling out of passages "to minor Elizabethan dramatists"²⁴, any commentator, he says, can assign passages in any play to any Elizabethan he wishes. Mr. Robertson's name is never mentioned, but the slur is quite obvious. In general, however, in his later books, there are more precise acknowledgments to modern critics, especially to Miss Spurgeon²⁵ and Mgr. Kolbe²⁶—but not always. For instance there is no mention of Miss Spurgeon in the discussion of the beast-imagery in *King Lear* in Chapter IV of *The Shakespearian Tempest*, and the same omission appears in Chapter X ("the Lear Universe") in *The Wheel of Fire*. Worse than this is the critic's absolute failure even to name A. C. Bradley in the obvious "lift" of that critic's division of "The Lear Universe"—though Mr. Knight later gives a less important direct acknowledgment to Bradley in *The Imperial Theme*. Other such omissions could probably be pointed out—we are merely trying to establish a doubt with regard to Mr. Knight's originality on the score of modern criticism.

Reviewers have already declared that Mr. Knight's distinction between the Reason and the Intuition—Criticism and Interpretation—is distinctly not original: "Take two cupfuls of Kant and three of Croce, two teaspoonfuls of Coleridge and one of De

²²*The Imperial Theme*, p. 106n.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 253.

²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁵*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 143; *The Imperial Theme*, pp. 27, 130, 146, 208, 244, 332; *The Shakespearian Tempest*, p. 87n.

²⁶*The Imperial Theme*, pp. 139, 316.

²⁷Compare also Chapter VII, p. 143, of *The Wheel of Fire*.

²⁸P. 188.

Quincey; mix together in the neo-Hegelian pot of the two Bradleys; bring to rapid boil in the wheel of fire, and finish off with a little extract of Bergson".² Time and again Mr. Knight echoes and reechoes what he calls the central ideas of the plays—we have noted most of them above—but two more will recall the method: *Measure for Measure* has a "central theme: the moral nature of man in relation to the crudity of man's justice, especially in the matter of sexual vice"³; in *Troilus and Cressida* "the theme is this. Human values are strongly contrasted with human failings"⁴: All of this is "old stuff": the Germans Ulrici and Gervinus fought over it for thirty years or more in the nineteenth century, and yet Mr. Knight nowhere mentions the name of either German.

Nor is Mr. Knight reliable in his handling of historical criticism. He professes contempt for it, as noted above, but uses it himself when he needs it to support his own theories: for example, Miss Lily Campbell's analysis of the passions is essentially an historical study of Elizabethan psychology, and so whenever he uses her work⁵, Mr. Knight is placing hostages in the hands of the enemy. It is curious also in this connection that he shows no knowledge of Miss Ruth Anderson's important monograph, *Elizabethan Psychology and Shakespeare's Plays*⁶, and as a result his discussions of the soul⁷ and the significance of blood⁸ in Shakespeare are rather ridiculous. He would have learned more about why Iago and Iachimo happen to be alike⁹ if he had read Mr. Stoll on the Calumninator Credited. This might be kept up indefinitely, for to throw out Shakespeare's stage and theatrical technique in one sweeping sentence¹⁰ shows just how far the critic will lead us from Shakespeare and his age into the mystical dreams of modern metaphysics.

One character, Hamlet, will indicate more precisely, how the critic has gone astray from the Elizabethan original. Mr. Knight's Hamlet is a product of the Romantic Heresy promulgated by such

²*The Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, VI (July, 1931), 101.

³*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 80.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁵See his Preface to *The Imperial Theme*.

⁶University of Iowa, 1927.

⁷*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 289.

⁸*The Imperial Theme*, p. 49.

⁹*Myth & Miracle*, p. 18.

¹⁰*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 14.

men as Francis Gentleman (1770), George Steevens (1773), William Richardson (1774, 1784), Henry Mackenzie (1780), Thomas Robertson (1790) and, in the nineteenth century, Coleridge, Hazlitt, Lamb, Dowden—in the twentieth, Bradley and Clutton-Brock. It is time this heresy is brought to earth. Let Mr. Knight read J. M. Robertson, Roy Mackenzie, and E. E. Stoll on Hamlet and see what Shakespeare really intended him to be. Of course the critic disclaims any interest in the poet's intentions,⁶ but his neglect of such intentions has led him into proposing a milksop hero for an Elizabethan audience. And this in the face of such a damaging historical admission as "Shakespeare's England delighted in watching both physical torment and the comic ravings of actual lunacy"⁷. Mr. Knight made this remark, of course, in connection with *Lear*, but certainly it greatly undermines his own historical aversion: in short, he might also consider Hamlet in the light of "Shakespeare's England".

This Hamlet problem further leads us to note some flagrant contradictions in Mr. Knight's statements. Hamlet's "will," he says, "is snapped and useless, like a broken leg."⁸ But in the same book in the last chapter, the critic declares, "'will' clearly finds no place in the passionate world of the great tragedies"⁹. In the first chapter of *The Imperial Theme* he announces that one cannot understand the "negative forces"¹⁰ in the latter plays until he knows the values that are therein attacked: in other words Mr. Knight has written his books backwards, for he discusses these later plays and their negations in the preceding book, *The Wheel of Fire*. In chapter VII of this same book he promised to elaborate "two main personal themes: the Brutus-theme and the Cassius-theme", but he apparently never got to the latter. But unfairly citing the famous teleological heresy¹¹ as a normal specimen of character-criticism he contemptuously discards analysis of characters, and yet he proceeds to characterize *Lear* at length¹², to say nothing of Pandarus, Troilus, Achilles, and Thersites in *Troilus and*

⁶*Ibid*, p. 6.

⁷*Ibid*, pp. 185-6.

⁸*Ibid*, p. 26.

⁹*Ibid*, p. 285n.

¹⁰*The Imperial Theme*, p. 16.

¹¹*The Wheel of Fire*, pp. 9-10. For example, "Shakespeare wished in *Macbeth* to show how crime inevitably brings retribution" (p. 10.)

¹²*The Wheel of Fire*, pp. 219ff.

Cressida." These citations, again, are merely suggestive of the [Queen's Quarterly, XXXIX (August, 1932), 574] warns Mr. Knight that Shakespeare "wrote plays, not metaphysics". critic's tendency to self-contradiction. Doubtless many others could be adduced.

One of the most uncritical aspects of Mr. Knight's approach appears in the contempt for textual criticism. We have already suggested this point above, but it needs some further elaboration now. Here is a man who directly refers to Mr. J. Dover Wilson twice²² and yet who has the consummate effrontery to write: "... the general reader is not quite independent of the higher scholarship" and will believe²³ that much of *Timon of Athens* and the Vision of Juppiter in *Cymbeline* are spurious; he will believe that Fletcher wrote the soliloquies of Wolsey in *Henry VIII*. And hence the general reader will lose enjoyment by virtue of this "false commentary": "my purpose here is in part to safeguard Shakespere for the general reader from the disintegration of misguided scholarship. While a right interpretation is not offered, many wrong ones will continue to appear."²⁴ We shall come back later to Mr. Knight's tendency to excessive self-satisfaction; it will be well here to add two other remarks of the critic to show his method in handling textual problems: "I have no space to enter here the question of authorship [of *Pericles*]"²⁵ "The vision [in *Cymbeline*] is clearly authentic: I have written a detailed defence, but it is crowded out of this volume."²⁶ Such remarks lead to no particular confidence in Mr. Knight as a sane critic of Shakespeare.

His textual indifference lures him, as indicated above, to acceptance, practically without reservation, of *Pericles*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, *Henry VI*, Part III, *Cymbeline*, *Macbeth* and *The Phoenix and the Turtle*. With regard to the Vision of Juppiter in *Cymbeline* the critic remarks, characteristically: "... there is nothing whatever in the style to justify a critic who knows his Shakespeare [our italics] in enlisting the services of the incompetent coadjutor".²⁷ Of the Hecate speeches in *Macbeth* he

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 67, 68, 60, 63. With regard to character analysis one critic

²³*The Imperial Theme*, Preface and p. 152.

²⁴*The Shakespearian Tempest*, p. 2.

²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 218n.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p. 240n. This may refer to his letter to the *London Times Literary Supplement*, August 15, 1929. The *Times* reviewer had attacked him in the August 8 number.

²⁸*Myth & Miracle*, p. 13.

writes, "I omit the Hecate scenes and speeches. They do not seem to me to blend with the whole play. Even so, they may be Shakespearian, added at some later date than the original composition: which may account for their inclusion in the Folio. I hope to discuss them later."¹⁰⁰ He does so, in Appendix B of *The Shakespearian Tempest* and decides they are probably Shakespearian: "they do not look like Middleton's work".¹⁰¹ Always the critic's textual animadversions are essentially merely impressionistic, and they result generally in some astonishing critical judgments.

Consider these "values", for instance. *Pericles* represents "the furthest reach of Shakespeare's poetic and visionary power."¹⁰² *Titus Andronicus* is "the Lear of Shakespeare's youth"¹⁰³ *Timon of Athens* has "gigantic architecture"¹⁰⁴ it is "on a scale even more tremendous than that of *Macbeth* and *Lear*"¹⁰⁵; "In these scenes the Shakespearian poetry takes on a mighty and compulsive rhythm a throb and pulse unknown in other plays"¹⁰⁶ "*Timon* marks an advance on *Lear* in the mystic understanding of death".¹⁰⁷ Such critical judgments seem a little grotesque.

But Mr. Knight's method of approach tends naturally to lead him into such weird remarks. Reviewers have already pointed out¹⁰⁸ the amusing results of the symbolic prepossession in *extremis*. Thus Katherine's breaking the lute on Hortensio's head is a "very vivid tempest-music contrast".¹⁰⁹ Mr. Knight's defence of this later became: "Katherine is seven times compared to tempestuous weather: and she smashes the lute on her music master's head. Your reviewer finds this a doubtful piece of evidence; but it cannot, at least, be said to conflict with my principle of a tempest-music opposition, and is, therefore, important in its degree."¹¹⁰ More amusing yet is Mr. Knight's insistence that the ducking of Falstaff in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* is symbolic and that even

¹⁰⁰*The Imperial Theme*, p. 145n.

¹⁰¹P. 332.

¹⁰²*Myth & Miracle*, p. 13.

¹⁰³*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 186.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁵*Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁰⁶*Ibid.*, p. 246.

¹⁰⁷*The Imperial Theme*, p. 357.

¹⁰⁸See the *London Times Literary Supplement*, February 2, 1933.

¹⁰⁹*The Shakespearian Tempest*, p. 111.

¹¹⁰See the *London Times Literary Supplement*, March 9, 1933.

the name, "Brook", is significant." So, also, in *Julius Caesar*, Brutus, listening to Lucius' music, sees Caesar's ghost: i.e., says Mr. Knight, love and music are attacked by an evil spirit." This simple *reductio ad absurdum* might be kept up indefinitely, but there are a few other points which cast shadows over the possibility of one's falling in love with Mr. Knight's system.

One other curious aspect of the critic's point of view is the religious preoccupation. The title of Chapter V of *The Wheel of Fire* is "Measure for Measure and the Gospels". The motto for Chapter V of *The Imperial Theme* is an excerpt from the Lord's Prayer. *Lear* is compared to the *Book of Job*.¹⁷ Tragedy and our religion "are inter significant. The Christian cross is only the symbol of the Greatest of Tragedies".¹⁸ The King at prayer is nearer Heaven than Hamlet with his "devilish hope of finding a more damning moment . . . Whose words would be more acceptable of Jesus' God?"¹⁹ Theseus in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is "Christ-like".²⁰ Such is our ethic of the imagination: it will often be found to bear remarkable correspondence to that of Christ".²¹ Shakespeare's religion, Mr. Knight is quite satisfied, "is Roman Catholic. The Protestant representatives are, it seems, less important".²² All this in the face, for example, of the conspicuous paganism of *King Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Julius Caesar*, *Timon of Athens*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Pericles*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, to mention most of Mr. Knight's favorites. "The salient fact . . . is that Shakespeare has 'no religion'. He cannot be labelled Catholic or Protestant," announces *The Standard*.²³

There remains Mr. Knight's peculiar self-satisfaction which seems to pervade his work from beginning to end. Note his four principles of "right [our italics] Shakespearian interpretation"²⁴

¹⁷*The Shakespearian Tempest*, pp. 7, 100.

¹⁸*The Imperial Theme*, p. 21.

¹⁹*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 209.

²⁰*Myth & Miracle*, p. 9.

²¹*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 40.

²²*The Shakespearian Tempest*, p. 330.

²³*The Imperial Theme*, p. 24. Compare the attack on this idea in the *London Times Literary Supplement*, January 21, 1932.

²⁴*Ibid*, p. 13.

²⁵Percival Chubb, "The Ethical Challenge of Shakespeare". *The Standard*, XVI (October, 1929), 45. Mr. Knight here deliberately ignores his accepted Master, A. C. Bradley, on the secular aspect of Elizabethan tragedy. And compare J. C. James, "Religion in Shakespeare", *London Quarterly Review*, CLV (April 1931), 239-49.

²⁶*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 15.

stated above. The pronouns "I" and "my" appear repeatedly: "my method" will show "order, reason, and necessity";¹⁰ "In this essay I indicate the nature of Hamlet's mental suffering";¹¹ etc. Apparently his method is the only right method: too often, he declares, the ordinary critic discusses Shakespeare "without the requisite emotional sympathy and *agility of intellect*" [our italics¹²]; "In this way only will the tempests of professional discord be resolved in the music of the understanding".¹³ The critic is perhaps worried about the personal preoccupations of his criticism but stoutly maintains, like any true romantic, that he prefers the "fiery circle of poetry" to "the cold night of the actual".¹⁴ Thus one more romantic critic of Shakespeare establishes himself as the "one and only" critic of Shakespeare.

IV.

It is quite true that some aspects of Mr. Knight's criticism are both interesting and instructive. He has added to the study of poetic imagery in Shakespeare instigated by Miss Spurgeon and Mgr. Kolbe, and he has also written some excellent appreciation of *Antony and Cleopatra*, especially from a stylistic point of view: the play's "phrases are sharp and brittle as icicles gleaming"¹⁵ *Othello* is "a large glowing coal", *Macbeth* "sparks from an anvil", *Lear* a "rocket", *Timon* "phosphorus churned to flame in a tropic ocean", but "*Antony and Cleopatra* is like a thin blazing electric filament, steadily instinct with keenest fire". He notes the predominance of "thin of feminine vowel sounds 'e' and 'i,'" which give the play an "intense buried energy". But he can also write in other spots such lines as: "as much about it, and probably more, than we do";¹⁶ "Hence the animal references in *Othello's* paroxysm, *Lear's* madness, and in *Timon*";¹⁷ and "neither are honest".¹⁸ Perhaps the critic's most worthy points are his wealth

¹⁰*Myth & Miracle*, p. 6.

¹¹*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 19.

¹²*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 13.

¹³*The Shakespearian Tempest*, p. 18. The *London Times Literary Supplement*, (August 8, 1929) attacks him for being too "dogmatic", "too positive": "Mr. Knight is nothing if not positive."

¹⁴*Myth & Miracle*, p. 29.

¹⁵*The Imperial Theme*, pp. 200, 204, 201, and 202 for the following quotations.

¹⁶*The Shakespearian Tempest*, p. 10.

¹⁷*The Wheel of Fire*, p. 288.

¹⁸*The Imperial Theme*, p. 314.

of illustrations and his generally clear outlines at the beginnings of essays. But anyone, with the "agility of intellect" which Mr. Knight professes, could produce such unimagined excellences.

In short, it is an extremely unfortunate development in the history of Shakespearean criticism that such a conspicuously visionary and self-satisfied romantic as Mr. Knight should now arise, like an echo of his more illustrious predecessors, and flaunt his critical banner to the skies as the only banner worth following into Shakespearean fields—one lone individual critic crying out against the coöperative, historical, and bibliographical labors of such competent and tested men as J. M. Robertson, E. E. Stoll, L. L. Schückling, W. J. Lawrence, A. W. Pollard, and J. Dover Wilson. It is like a child crying in the wilderness of metaphysical speculation and running petulantly from the great men all around him ready and able to lead him to the actual fountainhead of Shakespearean understanding—the age of Elizabeth itself.

"As the *London Times Literary Supplement* (January 21, 1932) points out, "Mr. Knight's Shakespeare is almost wholly Mr. Knight". "Mr. Knight, we think, has made the mistake of forming a theory and imposing it on the plays"—*TLS.*, August 8, 1929.

by Eron Dunbar Rowland

TERMINI

Whatever Jupiter's face was
Protector of,
Or Roman Victor guarded with
His border stone,
The termini,
Or far or near,
With which we mark our boundary here
Determine without word of court
If we have staked, or not, a claim
Where Heaven couples with this sphere
Her wide domain.

by Walter Fuller Taylor

ISRAFEL IN MOTLEY

A STUDY OF POE'S HUMOR.

I.

LUGUBRIOUS pictures of Poe's genius have been strangely persistent in American criticism. Almost before the moralist has quit shuddering at Poe's wickedness, the amateur psychologist has begun shuddering at his abnormality. Formerly, men with a rock-bound standard of respectability labeled the author of "Israfel" as a demon and consigned him to perdition. Now, men with a smattering of complexes and neuroses label him as a "case" and consign him to the psychopathic ward. The more humane and sanative qualities—particularly humor—are denied him. According to a recent critical study, Poe "could not . . . though he tried often, be humorous, because he had not one trace of humor in his make-up". According to a recent survey of American literature, Poe's most glaring fault is a "total lack of humor". American writers (the author continues) have usually possessed humor, and "its absence in so great a genius as Poe is all the more noticeable".

Yet this humorless man could write the broadest of burlesques on the pedantic moralism of his age. This genius of the *macabre* could handle a newspaper joke as deftly as the man-of-the-world, Willis. This maladjusted neurotic, who is said to have projected his own subconsciousness into morbid tales of horror, could compose a merciless travesty of the entire *genre* of horror stories, his own included. Although Poe was never a popular humorist like Irving, he did on occasion wear the jester's motley. And although his humorous tales are of no great intrinsic worth, they throw a flood of light on the personality of their author. They not only illustrate his tastes and prejudices; they illumine, as perhaps

nothing else does, his estimate of the literature of his time and his probable attitude toward his own work.

II.

To Poe, as to Irving and Cooper, New England was anathema. By taste he was opposed to the heavy moralism fostered by the New England writers; by temperament he disliked the Yankee type. The tremendous seriousness of the rising Transcendental school failed to impress him, and the popularity of the minor Boston literati kept him in a state of constant pique. That he might vent his dislike in burlesque, and that the New England solemnity was open to ridicule, Poe was keen enough to see. Moreover, if an author like Bryant could begin a tale with a lengthy dissertation on marriage, Poe could begin his burlesque with a dissertation on didactic literature and the stupidity of the critics:

Every fiction *should have* a moral; and what is more to the purpose, the critics have discovered that every fiction *has* . . . A novelist need have no care of his moral . . . When the proper time arrives, all that the gentleman intended, and all that he did not intend, will be brought to light, in the *Dial*, or the *Down-Easter*, together with all that he ought to have intended, and the rest that he clearly meant to intend.

Nevertheless, pending the discovery of a moral in his previous stories, Poe confesses that he is willing to offer the public the sad history of Toby Dammit, a tale fitted with so plain a moral that he who runs may read it in the title. "Never Bet the Devil Your Head" purports to be a horrible-example story which, like the New England novels of Sarah Morton and Hannah Foster, shows the frightful end of the wicked. Toby Dammit, like the hero of many a religious tract, reveals his wickedness even in infancy.

The fact is, his precocity in vice was awful. At five months of age he used to get into such a passion that he was unable to articulate. At six months I caught him gnawing a pack of cards. At seven months, he was in the constant habit of catching and kissing the female babies. At eight months he peremptorily refused to put his signature on the Temperance pledge. Thus he went on increasing in iniquity . . .

Among other evil habits, Dammit begins that of betting, in which he finally adopts the blasphemous formula, "I'll bet the Devil my head". One day, entering with a friend into a covered bridge, and being in a particularly graceless mood, he offers to bet the Devil his head that he can cut a pigeon-wing over a turnstile. Immediately a modest "Ahem!" directs Toby's attention to an impeccably reverend old gentleman who has lurked unobserved in the shadows. The gentleman, though he makes it a point of honor to allow Dammit a good run for his jump, insists on having the bet fulfilled; and, as Dammit is in the very act of cutting capers above the turnstile, he seizes the prodigal's head and disappears. Dammit, as Poe remarks, "did not long survive his terrible loss . . . He grew worse, and at length died, a lesson to all riotous livers".—With such gay irreverence, with such light-hearted *diablerie*, did Poe puncture the inflated solemnity of his moralistic rivals.

II The Transcendentalists, as well as the moralistic school in general, came under the lash of Poe. With satirical insight as keen as Byron's, Poe saw that the Transcendentalists took themselves too seriously, thought hazily, and wrote obscurely. Their half-articulate rhapsodies—so different from his own incisive clarity—he must have judged absurd, and in "How to Write a *Blackwood* Article" he set out to reduce that absurdity to the homeliest terms. A fictitious editor is advising a young blue-stocking about her use of "tone" in writing:

X There are various other tones of equal celebrity, but I shall mention only two more—the tone transcendental and the tone heterogeneous. In the former the merit consists in seeing into the nature of affairs a very great deal farther than anybody else . . . Put in something about the Supernal Oneness. Don't say a syllable about the Infernal Twoness. Above all, study innuendo. Hint everything—assert nothing. If you feel inclined to say 'bread and butter', do not by any means say it outright. You may say any and every thing *approaching* to 'bread and butter'. You may hint at buckwheat cake, or you may even go so far as to insinuate oatmeal porridge, but if bread and butter be your real meaning, be cautious, my *dear* Miss Psyche, not on any account to say 'bread and butter'.

Now, without maintaining that Poe had any specific passage in mind, but merely to illustrate what he was driving at, let us place

beside his satirical paragraph the following lines from Emerson:

The old Sphinx bit her thick lip,—
Said, "Who taught thee me to name?
I am thy spirit, yoke-fellow;
Of thine eye I am eyebeam.

Thou art the unanswered question;
Couldst see thy proper eye.
Always it asketh, asketh;
And each answer is a lie.
So take thy quest through nature,
It through thousand natures ply;
Ask on, thou clothed eternity;
Time is the false reply".

III.

Poe's humor does not always have a critical object. Apart from any satirical purpose, he could construct situations that are themselves intrinsically humorous. Some of this work, indeed, is too mechanical; it smacks of the daily grind of the editorial desk. A professional journalist, Poe wrote too often in the manner of the mediocre newspaper columnist, not hesitating to adapt to his purpose the cheapest methods of the vaudeville gag and slapstick. "The Man That Was Used Up", for instance, is merely a dressing-up of the old joke about the person with the false teeth, the cork leg, and the glass eye. "X-ing a Paragrab" merely rehashes the old tale of an editor who has to leave town because of a printer's error—a tale that must be cœval with the first print shop. "A Tale of Journalism" is a columnist's joke, relating how some Pharisees bargain with the besieging Romans for a lamb to sacrifice, and receive instead the unutterable flesh of an emaciated porker.

Occasionally, however, Poe's humor cuts deeper, and twice or thrice he attains to a wit as pungent as Congreve's or Sheridan's. In *The Duc de L'Omelette* a French epicure, having died of disgust over an ill-prepared dish, challenges Satan to play a game of cards for his soul, wins the game, bids his Infernal Majesty a polite adieu, and vanishes amid a crackle of witticisms. In "Mystification" a specialist in the etiquette of duelling is confounded by the superior niceties of the Baron von Jung. Far from descending to the vulgarity of a blow, the Baron displays his contempt by hurling a tumbler at his enemy's reflection in a mirror. In

the negotiations that follow, refinement is heaped on refinement until the duel, like Bob Acres' in *The Rivals*, never comes off.

In "The Devil in the Belfry" Poe tells with impish glee how the demon of irresponsibility breaks up a respectable Dutch village. The borough of Vondervotteimittiss has existed from time immemorial in exactly the same respectable manner. A town hall, crowned with a huge clock, stands in the center of a circular valley. Sixty houses, all facing inward toward the clock, and all precisely alike, are disposed about the circle. In each house live three boys of the same height, a little old man with a pipe, and a plump dame with a ladle. Beside each house is a garden, and in each garden are twenty-four cabbages. At high noon each day every burgher sets his watch exactly with the town clock. And so, among the cabbages, the children, and the clocks, life goes on with much peace and great respectability. Indeed, the town council have resolved that it is wrong to alter the good old course of things, that there is nothing tolerable outside of Vondervotteimittiss, and that they will stick forever by their clocks and their cabbages.

Into this sedate community, however, comes an elvish stranger with a gold snuff-box and a huge fiddle, dancing a fandango in the most execrably irregular time. Having mounted at noon to the steeple of the town hall, he batters the bell-ringer with his fiddle; seizes the rope, rings twelve, and keeps on ringing without a pause. On the stroke of thirteen the whole village is in an uproar. The pipes are all smoked out, the kraut is burned, and the boys roar with hunger. Clocks take to dancing on the mantles; cats and pigs scamper about, caterwauling and screeching; and the little devil in the belfry madly rings the bell. In short, the whole respectable society of the villagers is turned topsy-turvy.

Granted the license of a psychological amateur, what a sensation one could make out of this tale! The methodical burghers would come to symbolize, of course, the methodical, bourgeois public of early-Victorian America. The imp with the fiddle would become a projection of Poe's subconscious personality. The mad bell-ringing and fiddling would symbolize a repressed desire long present in Poe's Bohemian spirit—the desire to shock the easy-going public out of its respectable ruts. In short, psychology can be made to qualify Poe for a flat in Greenwich Village, as readily

as for a cell in the hospital for mental diseases. Not wishing to assume such license, however, one must be content with pointing out that "The Devil in the Belfry" is an impishly gleeful story, and that its glee will be appreciated by most wayward souls who have themselves felt the malicious impulse to amaze the very sedate.

In "Why the Little Frenchman Wears His Hand in a Sling" the humorous situation is commonplace enough. A Frenchman and an Irishman try to play hands with the same widow at the same time. Grasping each other's hands behind the widow's back, they are thrilled to the marrow by the affectionate feminine touch. At present no American tale-teller, in all probability, would attempt such a stage trick; but in Poe's time, we may suppose, the thing had not been worn so threadbare in minstrel show and movie. For once, moreover, Poe's humor is a matter of character rather than of situation or satire. The hero, who tells the tale in the first person, announces himself with a raciness worthy of O. Henry:

It's on my visiting cards sure enough (and it's them that's all o' pink satin paper) that inn'y gintleman that plases may behould the intheristin' words, "Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronnitt, 39 Southampton Row, Russell Square, Parish o' Bloomsbury." And shud ye be wantin' to diskiver who is the pink of perlitness quite, and the laider of the hot tun in the houl city o' London—why, it's jist mesilf.

Dapper, good-humored, full of blarney and brazen self-confidence, Sir Patrick O'Grandison is that unusual thing in Poe, a real flesh-and-blood character. And the tale in which he figures, far from being a compendium of horrors, is a boisterous anecdote after the manner of Fielding or Smollett. Moreover, it is among the first American short stories to be told entirely in dialect—perhaps the very first. ★

IV.

Nor is the wit of Poe confined to burlesques of American solemnity and clever re-handlings of journalistic humor. Poe could laugh not only at the Transcendentalists, but at himself as well. Though tales of sensibility and horror were Poe's forte, his satires show that he grasped perfectly their weaknesses—their

morbidity, their neglect of the plausible, the shallowness of their appeal to mere excitement. At almost the same time when he was writing "Berenice"—a horrible tale of lunacy, premature burial, and mutilation—he was writing "Loss of Breath"—a travesty of the whole *genre* to which "Berenice" belongs. Taking a hint from Swift, perhaps, Poe sets out to ridicule his object of satire by pretending to imitate it, meanwhile heightening its ridiculous traits until the veriest dolt can see their absurdity. Heroes in former Gothic tales had been lost in caves, encountered panthers, braved the plague, suffered the tortures of the Inquisition, and yet survived. Poe would tell of a hero who survived more horrors than they, even to the loss of his breath. The man is smothered in a coach, his arms are broken, his skull is fractured, he is hanged, and his body is shut up in a vault; but, as he cannot breathe his last breath, he cannot die. Finally, having discovered his lost breath concealed on the body of a neighbor, he recaptures it, opens the door of the vault, and sets forth as jauntily as ever. Travesty, surely, can go no further.

As if to make himself doubly clear, Poe points out in the subtitle of his tale the magazine whose policies he wished to ridicule. When "Loss of Breath" was first published, the subtitle read, "A la *Blackwood*"; later it read "A Tale Neither In Nor Out of *Blackwood*". Poe, moreover, states explicitly in a letter to J. P. Kennedy, his literary sponsor, that "Loss of Breath" was intended as a satire on the extravagances of *Blackwood's Magazine*. In spite of all this, however, Poe's satirical import has been often overlooked. "Loss of Breath" has even been cited as proof that Poe had no humor, and that his attempts at humor degenerate into jauntily delivered lists of horrors. As if a reader of Swift's "Modest Proposal", failing to grasp its satirical purpose, should thereupon conclude that Swift had no humor, but merely a faculty for revelling in the horrible! Of course, neither "Loss of Breath" nor "A Modest Proposal" is humorous in itself; the humor of both lies in the sudden revelation of absurdity in the objects of their satire.

"Berenice" and "Loss of Breath" were written near the beginning of Poe's career, perhaps as early as 1832. Was Poe able to maintain this dual attitude toward his work? Could he continue to produce tales of horror with one-half of his brain, and laugh

at their absurdity with the other half? The answer lies in two sketches which Poe contributed to *The American Museum* in 1838—the time, approximately, of the terrible “Ligeia” and “The Fall of the House of Usher”. In the first of these sketches, “How to Write a Blackwood Article”, Poe gives a satirical recipe for the production of Gothic fiction. The famous editor of *Blackwood’s* is instructing a novice, Miss Psyche Zenobia, how to concoct a popular thriller:

Sensations are the great things after all. Should you ever be drowned or hung, be sure and make a note of your sensations—they will be worth to you ten guineas a sheet. . . .

The first thing requisite is to get yourself into such a scrape as no one ever got into before. The oven, for instance, that was a good hit. But if you have no oven or big bell at hand, and if you cannot conveniently tumble out of a balloon, or be swallowed up in an earthquake, or get stuck fast in a chimney, you will have to be contented with simply imagining some similar misadventure. I should prefer, however, that you have the actual fact to bear you out.

Having thus instructed his pupil where to look for thrills, the editor expounds the whole formula of the authors of the sensational tale, including their search for simile, their affectation of philosophy, and their use of pseudo-learned quotations from foreign tongues—precisely the formula which Poe himself often employed.

In “A Predicament”—a sequel to the *Blackwood* sketch—Miss Psyche Zenobia proves herself an apt pupil. Having left the editor’s office in search of thrills, she succeeds to the utmost in getting herself into “such a scrape as no one ever got into before”. She mounts into the steeple that holds the town clock, thrusts her head through an opening in the face, and looks out over the city. Suddenly she discovers that the huge minute-hand, descending, has wedged her neck against the bottom of the aperture and is slowly severing her head from her body. As the decapitation proceeds, Miss Psyche industriously records her thrills. Following instructions, she carefully inserts quotations from German, French, Italian, and Greek, butchering them fearfully in the process. Finally her head is severed and rolls down the gutter. She struggles desperately to record at once the sensations of the head as it looks up at the body, and of the body as it looks down

at the head. "A Predicament", considered merely as a story, is of course not humorous, but callously grotesque. The humor lies in Poe's *reductio ad absurdum* of the extravagances of Gothic fiction.

A still later tale, "The Premature Burial", also smacks of burlesque. In tales like "Bernice" and "The Fall of the House of Usher" Poe had handled seriously the theme of the burial of the living; indeed, he had wrung from it its ultimate in horror. In the later tale, however, he begins with the sober air of unimpeachable truthfulness which, in a pupil of Defoe's, is a sure forerunner of a hoax. After describing four "actual" cases of premature interment, the hero, who is subject to catalepsy, relates how the fear of premature burial has grown upon him. He has gone so far as to purchase a cushioned coffin that opens from the inside, and to rig up a bell that can be rung from within the family vault. Finally he awakes from a cataleptic fit in utter darkness, with narrow walls of pine pressing insufferably upon him. Shuddering, he realizes that the worst has happened. He has been taken ill among strangers and has been buried alive in an ordinary grave. With a scream he tries to extricate himself, only to be seized and forced back into his place, amid the commotion of a volley of curses. He soon recollects, of course, that he is in reality on a voyage, and that his coffin is only the stuffy berth of the ship. Heartily ashamed of his weakness, he cures himself of the horrors by taking out-door exercise and by avoiding all bugaboo stories—"like this one".

Nothing is clearer, in fine, than that Poe realized the absurdity of the tale of horror, and that he ridiculed it at the very time he was writing it. Having built his fictional structure with the most cunning art, he himself razed it with travesty.

V.

Can this astonishing paradox be explained? Can the Poe of "Berenice" be reconciled with the Poe of "Loss of Breath"? The key to the puzzle is to be discovered in a letter which Poe wrote in 1835 to T. W. White of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and which Professor Napier Wilt has printed in *Modern Philology*. White had suggested that the subject of "Berenice" was too horrible for artistic literature. Poe, though he admits the justice of

the criticism, nevertheless replies: "The history of all magazines shows plainly that those which obtained celebrity were indebted for it to *articles similar in nature to 'Berenice'*, although, I grant you, far superior in execution. You ask me in what does that nature consist. In the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque; the fearful colored into the horrible; the witty exaggerated into the burlesque; and the singular heightened into the strange and mystical". As examples of the popular tale of terror, Poe names four contemporary stories, two of which he later ridiculed in the *Blackwood* essay. His letter proceeds: "You may well say that all of this is in bad taste . . . But whether the articles of which I speak are in bad taste is of little purpose. To be appreciated you must *be read* and these things are sought after with avidity".

This letter, it should be observed, accurately characterizes both Poe's serious tales of terror and his travesties. "The fearful colored into the horrible" is an excellent description of "Berenice"; "the witty exaggerated into the burlesque", of "Loss of Breath". Moreover, he had evolved the formula for both kinds of story by studying the policies of successful magazines, not by following any compelling bent in his own nature. For the aesthetics of the Gothic tale, Poe holds no brief; yet, as a young author who must earn his bread with his pen, he is willing to recognize its popularity and cater to the popular demand. And because his rational, critical sense reveals the absurdity of this work, he is ready to subject it to ridicule according to another formula of the periodical tale—"the witty exaggerated into the burlesque". "Berenice" is the product of journalistic expediency; "Loss of Breath" is the product of journalistic expediency plus the critical faculty.

Seen in the light of his humorous tales and satires, does not the character of Poe take on almost another dimension? The popular idea that Poe's horrible tales betoken an innately horrible mind becomes untenable. The psycho-analytical picture of Poe as an abnormal neurotic fades into the dimmest outlines, if it does not vanish entirely. What pathological case ever sat in judgment on the absurdity of his own fantasies and withered them with public ridicule? In place of such lugubrious portraits of Poe quite another picture arises—a picture of the gaily irreverent wit who delighted in tossing darts of mockery among the heavy moralizers of his age; of the resourceful young journalist who

adept in professional jugglery, was ready to entertain his public with a roystering farce as well as a Gothic thriller; of the pungent satirist who, almost alone in the America of his generation, made war on sentimental extravagance.

The portrait of Israfel in motley discloses, of course, only a few traits of a baffling and many-sided character; but it offers a most salutary corrective to the morbidly sentimental paintings evolved from the dubious moralism of a former generation, and the equally dubious amateur psychology of our own.

by Kathleen Sutton

STARS LIKE THESE

Milleniums since the Piltdown Man
Marveled at the sky's bright plan.

Aeschylus and Sophocles
Knew the selfsame stars as these.

Age on ages since man's birth
Has furrowed the indifferent earth,

Planted song and reaped a tear,
Prayed the turning of the year;

And all have known brief ecstasies
Contemplating stars like these.

Steady, Stars! Though all else change—
Familiar things become the strange,

And havoc strike each minaret—
You alone endure and let

Your vast, mysterious luster say:
"Fear not, Timid Ones. We stay."

by Byrom Dickens

T. S. STRIBLING AND THE SOUTH

MR. STRIBLING'S *Unfinished Cathedral*,¹ the third novel in his trilogy of the social history of the South, has now been published. An examination of this trilogy along with his other novels reveals that his is one of the sanest pictures of the South to be presented by a Southern novelist. He paints sympathetically the South of Civil War and Reconstruction days; yet he avoids the gushing sentimentality which is the bane of most of our novelists dealing with this period. He presents us with the hillman and in so doing avoids both the romanticized "natural" man and the equally exaggerated perverts and bastards as portrayed by William Faulkner.

We appreciate what Mr. Stribling has done when we examine the Southern novel of the past. John Pendleton Kennedy is usually accredited with the establishment of the "Southern" novel in that he began the plantation tradition with his *Swallow Barn* in 1832. He wrote of kind masters, faithful slaves, and gay young people who lived on the plantations of Virginia. In the same vein were the novels of John Esten Cooke who wrote a few years later. Both Kennedy and Cooke were careful to present only the brighter side of the leisurely agrarian life; but in character portrayal they were much superior to the novelists who took up the plantation tradition after the Civil War.

The War and the days of Reconstruction which followed almost destroyed the civilization of which Kennedy and Cooke had written. The slaves were freed; many of the plantations were broken up into small farms; and a large per cent. of the landed

¹UNFINISHED CATHEDRAL, by T. S. Stribling. 1934. Garden City, L. I.: Doubleday, Doran & Co.

aristocrats were pauperized. The tragedy and drama of these changes, however, furnished excellent material for a new development of the Southern novel. Thomas Nelson Page was among the foremost to utilize it. But he did not concern himself so much with characterization as with local color in which there are bathetic narrative and description of heroic Southerners, thieving carpetbaggers, villainous Negroes, and rescuing Ku Kluxers. The sentimentality fairly drools. Thomas Dixon, Jr., used the same materials in his novels and was even more vindictive in his pictures of the Negro and carpetbagger. In their failure to create character both are definitely local colorists. Joel Chandler Harris and George Washington Cable must also be classed with the local colorists. The former gives, through the charming character of old Uncle Remus, a mellow picture of the relationship between Negro and White as it existed "befo' de wah". The latter portrays glamorously the lives of Blacks, Whites, and Creoles in the Old World atmosphere of early nineteenth century New Orleans.

Local colorists also exploited the hillman and mountaineer as material for novels. Mary Noailles Murfree (Charles Craddock) was one of the first to employ this theme which has been exceedingly popular with more recent Southern novelists. Her pictures of "dancin' parties", "gaynder pullin's" and "revenooers", garnished with liberal splotches of mountain scenery, are interesting; but her characters are not very convincing as individuals. Even so, her novels are much superior to those of the more popular John Fox, Jr., whose mountaineers never escape driveling melodrama.

In treating the plantation and the Negro, most of our contemporary Southern novelists have followed the tradition of the past in avoiding a realistic presentation of the problems rising out of a duality of races in the South. Some, such as Julia Peterkin, avoid the problem in devoting themselves exclusively to Negro characters; or, as in DuBose Heyward's *Porgy*, they minimize the relation between Blacks and Whites. As a result we see the pathos, the humor, the simplicity, and the childlike superstition of the Negroes; and the racial problem is forgotten. Others, notably Caroline Gordon in *Penhally*, return to the plantation tradition with a vengeance. In so doing, they avoid the racial problem through painting the master of "the big house" as adopt-

ing a fatherly attitude toward his Negroes, who are not only extraordinarily childish but also so lazy and shiftless that they are really exploiting the master rather than being exploited by him.

In treating the hillman and mountaineer, contemporary Southern novelists have been more frank. But here too they have had difficulties in presenting a balanced picture. Some, such as Faulkner, have been led away from the norm of reality by a love for literary pyrotechnics. Others, such as Grace Lumpkin, have written realistic stories, but have allowed propaganda to interfere too much with their art.

I.

How has Mr. Stribling handled the two traditions in the Southern novel? Let us examine first that of the hillman, and then that of the plantation and the Negro. Two of Stribling's novels are concerned primarily with the hillman: *Bright Metal* and *Teeftallow*. In the first the narrative is told from the point of view of Agatha Pomroy, an Easterner who has married a Tennessee hillman while the latter was in the East. She has never been in the South, but now returns with her husband to the Tennessee hill country where they are to make their home. Her knowledge of this country is such as might be derived from reading Southern novels of the local color school. She thinks she is going into a colorful land of colonial mansions where handsome men and beautiful, dark-eyed women will dispense with antique courtesy and overflowing hospitality. In the days that follow her arrival, she sees the hill country as it really is. The drabness, the fanaticism, the bigotry, and the cruelty, as well as the more pleasant naïve childishness of hill life pass before her. In *Teeftallow* we get a similar picture; but herein a native, Abner Teeftallow, rather than an outsider, is the central figure in the story. Furthermore, whereas in *Bright Metal* Agatha struggles against her environment, Abner accepts it. In this respect *Teeftallow* is different not only from *Bright Metal*, but also, as Burton Rascoe points out in *Arts and Decoration*, May, 1926, it is different from all other realistic novels of the American community.

In the two novels Stribling depicts with an objectivity unusual in our Southern novelists the hillman's animosity toward the out-

side world, his distrust of the law, his cruel violence when aroused and, pervading all, his Calvinistic religion.

Innate is the hillman's dislike for the outside world. It thinks him inferior. It is wealthy, fashionable, and, as a corollary, wicked. Hence he delights in stories of city people who have been duped by the clever dishonesty of rural magnates such as "Railroad Jones" of *Teestallow*. Hence it is that he guffaws with amusement when the local constable tricks an urbanite into speeding and then drags him before the magistrate to be fined, as in *Bright Metal*.

He considers the law an uncertain, complicated system which clever lawyers can twist to suit their own ends. It does not insure the speedy, vindictive, Old Testament punishment which he desires. It is not terrible enough. He would like to impress upon the outside world that his community punishes the evil-doer. As a result there arise mobs, whose members feel a glow of self-righteous pride as instruments of justice. When a mob gathers to hang Peck Bradley, in *Teestallow*, it excuses itself on the grounds that it is punishing a murderer who might otherwise escape. Again after it has vented its rage over the bloody, lacerated body of Abner Teeftallow, one of its spokesmen prods the still form with his foot and says:

"We're goin' to make this a decent, moral county if we haff to."

But it is in his picture of the hillman's religion that Stribling departs farthest from the traditional novel of the hill country. Theirs is a Calvinistic fundamentalism which condemns all pleasure as being evil, a religion which is concerned with a bloody, cruel God who is capable of playing off one sinner against another. For example, when Tug Beavers is ambushed by Peck Bradley, it is considered as God's work. Tug had refused to come to the "mourner's bench" when the minister exhorted him to do so. The unusual becomes a miracle and is told as evidence of God's intervention in their daily lives. For example, a bullet fired at Abner Teeftallow is stopped by a forty-five revolver which he has in his pocket. A few days later it is being told throughout the community that the bullet was stopped by a Bible which Abner had in his pocket, and that there was probably some divine intent in his being saved. Verses from the Bible are quoted to justify almost any desired course of action; it matters not if these verses

happen to be irrelevant. Abner Teeftallow attempts to justify the hanging of Peck Bradley, a murderer by quoting "Vengeance is mine", saith the Lord." He adds that of course the Lord expects them, the mob, to exact vengeance for Him.

If we contrast one of the church services as portrayed by Miss Murfree with one of those portrayed by Stribling, we get a very good idea of how far he has departed from the traditional novel of the hillman. Whereas she tends to soften the tones in order to show a simple people, fundamentally good, he reveals the violent, stern nature which is the hillman's even in his religion, a religion of which the very cornerstone is the fear of being horribly damned to a hell of fire and brimstone. But to say, as does Mr. Robert Penn Warren in *The American Review* for February, 1934, that Stribling considers religion abnormal is to be unjust to Stribling. He is anti-fundamentalist, but not anti-religious. In *Unfinished Cathedral* Stribling makes Jerry Catlin as much his mouthpiece as any other character in the book; and in the conclusion of this novel Jerry insists upon the necessity of God in the lives and hearts of humanity today.

Few writers have surpassed the bitter irony with which Stribling portrays the life of hilltown. Its cruel gossip, its ostracization of the unfortunate, and the hypocrisy and sadistic inhumanity of its mobs he depicts excellently. Yet he offers no remedy, presents no solution for the evils portrayed. He merely presents characters and conditions as he sees them, glozing over nothing.

II.

Two of Stribling's novels, *The Forge* and *The Store*, are definitely in the plantation tradition. *Unfinished Cathedral* and *Birthright* we shall consider along with these because of their similar treatment of the Negro problem. *The Forge*, *The Store*, and *Unfinished Cathedral*, composing Stribling's trilogy of the social history of the South, center around a white family, the Vaidens; but their relations with the Negroes play an important part. *Birthright*, Stribling's first novel of any importance, is the story of a Negro who returns to the South after four years at Harvard.

The Forge treats the period of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Old man Jimmie Vaiden, "meat-eating Baptist", with three sets

of children, including the Negro girl Gracie, is a slave-owner and cotton farmer on a small scale residing near Florence, Alabama. The Lacefields, representing a more aristocratic South, reside on a plantation nearby. Stribling shows us their leisurely courtliness, their pleasant unhurried lives, and their charming hospitality. He thrills us with the gallant courage of the heroes who ride away to defend the South. He portrays their heroic struggle in the battle of Shiloh. He reveals their suffering during the days of Reconstruction. But Stribling does not ignore the other side of the picture; he recognizes the suffering of the Negroes who support the landed aristocracy. It is in this respect that he differs most from the older Southern novelists. Gracie and Solomon, slaves, are separated as if they were a brood mare and a stud. Marcia, one of the Vaiden children, sympathizes; but she does so as she would with a favorite hound which has lost his mate. And when Gracie is violated by one of the Vaiden children, Marcia grieves for Gracie; but at the same time she reflects that after all Gracie is a Negro and so by nature unchaste. She concludes that Negroes are like the lower animals and so probably without sin.

We see that when the War was over, such Negroes as Lump Mowbray did create trouble between Negroes and Whites, that the White aristocracy was disenfranchised under a carpetbagger rule of Reconstruction, and that the Ku Klux Klan was a result. But Stribling, in contrast to his predecessors, treats all this with remarkable restraint. And in contrast to previous novelists, he recognizes the suffering which guerilla warfare inflicted upon the South both during and immediately after the War.

He indicates how the leisurely life of the plantation gentlemen was destroyed by the War; how they were forced to become traders, landlords, and business men. His character Miltiades Vaiden recognized the revolution which the War had effected. Miltiades concluded that since the Negroes had become free legal agents, the man who bought and sold for them would in all probability finally receive their earnings. This man would have to be different from the slave owner; he would be a man who could get along with Negroes, but who would not be too scrupulous in his business methods. The reins of power in the South would pass into the hands of such people. The landed aristocrat

would be supplanted by the tradesman, by the shopkeeper. In this prophecy Stribling foreshadows his treatment of the South of twenty years later in *The Store*.

In *The Store* the scene has shifted from the plantation to the town. So it is in Florence rather than on the plantations near it that most of our narrative occurs. We see the efforts of Miltiades Vaiden to secure a store and later to maintain it and its attendant holdings. For indeed the War did shift the proprietorship in the land from the manor to the store. It resulted in a new method of working the Negro under the "share-crop" system instead of under simple chattel slavery. Under this system, the merchant, who is also a landowner, settles tenants on his farms and furnishes them with such food as is necessary for their existence. At the end of the year, he takes his pay from the tenant's share of the cotton crop. Almost invariably the tenant finds that at the end of the year he owes the "store" as much as or more than the price of his share in the crop.

Both *The Store* and *Birthright* indicate that the Civil War may have freed the Negro legally, but it did not elevate him to the position of a responsible human being as far as the South is concerned. Even Miltiades, who had a reputation among the Negroes themselves for treating them justly, did not treat his black tenants as people with rights but rather as children who could be set about anywhere and anyway. He and the rest of the White population thought of the Negroes as ineducable; and when some of them did show proficiency, he mused that they were probably like parrots which memorized things without understanding their meaning. When in *Birthright* Peter Siner, the Negro graduate of Harvard, is swindled, the White people of Hooker's Bend conclude that the whole affair simply proves what they have known all along; you cannot educate a Negro.

The poor Whites, hillmen, not only assume that they are much superior to the Negro; but they are positively vindictive toward him. They resort to violence in order to convince themselves and the rest of the world of this superiority. It is this class which creates mobs, which is responsible for lynchings, and which is determined to "keep the nigger in his place". With an inhuman casualness it makes the punishment of the quadroon Toussaint, who has done nothing more than insist upon his rights, the same

as that of the two white men who are murderers and thieves. With a proud consciousness of its own superiority in being white, it dehumanizes the Negro in soliloquizing: "They're funny damn things, niggers is; never know a care nor trouble. Lord! I wish I was as care-free as they are."

To make the whole problem more tragic, the Negro has adopted the white man's estimate of him. He longs to be like the white man, to have straight rather than kinky hair, to be light in color, to act like the white man. He accepts his own inferiority and moral irresponsibility as expressed in such institutions as 'toting', the ostensibly secret practice of carrying home some of the food prepared in the "white folks'" kitchen; a practice to which thousands of Negro cooks in the South resort in order to supplement their wages.

In all four of his novels which include the Negro problem (*The Forge*, *The Store*, *Unfinished Cathedral*, and *Birthright*) Stripling depicts the tragedy resultant from miscegenation. Old "Pap Vaiden", dying in the dust of his forge, cries out for one of his children to minister to him; but when Gracie, the half-white Negro, his only child present, protests that she is his child and will minister to him, he shoves her away and dies bitterly alone. In *The Store* Miltiades reflects ruefully that he has been indirectly responsible for the lynching of the quadroon Toussaint, his own son; and in *Unfinished Cathedral* the ghost of Toussaint returns to haunt him in the form of Toussaint's grandson. In *Birthright* old Captain Renfrew cries out that his child marches away under a black shroud, unknowing and unknown.

III.

Mr. Stripling offers no solution to the race problem just as he offers no solution to the problem of the hillman. But he traces the tragic irony in both. Nor does he imply that injustice to the Negro is confined to the South. In *Unfinished Cathedral* we learn that a young Negro, Denison, won a competitive fellowship to study in a research laboratory at Schenectady, only to lose it when it was learned that he was a Negro. But there are relatively few Negroes in the North; it is in the South that the problem is most acute, and it is with Southern conditions that

Stribling is concerned. As a portrayer of these conditions, his objectivity makes him one of the best of our Southern novelists. The very fact that he has no pat solution, that he has no ax to grind, either such as the Agrarians would offer with their economic obscurantism and nostalgic yearnings for the past or such as the Communists would offer in *To Make My Bread*, by Grace Lumpkin, is to his credit as a novelist.

Mr. Stribling's work has been very uneven in merit. His trilogy is much superior to his other works; and in the trilogy itself the last novel hardly equals the first two. This disparity is primarily a matter of characterization. Stribling has always shown a good sense of story value; he knows how to spin a good plot. But he has not always been successful in creating characters. Too frequently he does violence to a character in order to secure an ironic effect. Even his trilogy is not altogether free from this defect. Witness, in *Unfinished Cathedral*, Marsan's surrender to Red McLaughlin which is hardly consistent with the character of Marsan as developed later in the novel. In the trilogy as a unit, however, Stribling has succeeded in creating convincing characters. Even Mr. Robert Penn Warren, an adverse critic of Stribling, admits, with reservations, (in *The American Review* for February, 1934) that Miltiades and Gracie are characters which appeal to the imagination and linger in the memory. To these we would add, Mr. Warren to the contrary, as genuine and convincing characters such people as Marcia Vaiden, the young Ponny BeShears, and the two young Jerry Catlins. All of Mr. Stribling's work is interesting in its portrayal of the South; but with the exception of the trilogy it will probably not survive. The trilogy will live as a definite contribution to Southern literature; and the characters of Miltiades and Gracie will not be forgotten.

Mr. Warren says in his essay on Stribling (in *The American Review* for February, 1934) that Mr. Stribling is a propagandist. Certainly he is not a propagandist in behalf of any specific measure. If Mr. Warren means a propagandist against inhumanity and in behalf of a greater sympathy between man and man; then yes. But so in this sense were Thackeray and Meredith propagandists. After all, that which seems to irk Mr. Warren most is Stribling's Liberalism; presumably Stribling would be a better novelist were he an Agrarian.

by Robert T. Oliver

THE BIBLE AND STYLE

“**M**ODERN writers are leading the younger generation on a merry down-hill race to perdition.”

“The Bible, as a force to be reckoned with in writing, is dead.”

“The old conception that the King James translation of the Bible is the best monument to English prose style is hopelessly out of date.”

Remarks of this sort, which have become common-place to-day, would have been amusing to the King James translators. For they never intended their work to be a model for style. As an earnest group of scholars, laboring under the watchful eye of the Right Reverend Father in God, Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, they were concerned only with the one fact, that the scriptures must be rendered into English with exactly the same meaning as the original texts. The method they followed was painstakingly scientific. In periodic meetings, each of them would read aloud the bit he had translated, while all of the others would carefully follow his reading from the various versions available—Greek, Hebrew, Latin, French, Italian, German, Anglo-Saxon, etc.—and interrupt with such corrections as they deemed necessary. Surely literature was never produced under circumstances less propitious to good style.

Yet so admirable was their manner that the King James Bible was hailed at once as the well-spring of good writing. Not only was it excellent in itself, but the cause of excellence that was in others. Sir Thomas Browne declared that his principal study was in two books—the King James Bible, and “that universal and public manuscript, Nature”. This meditator upon burial urns and the significance of quincuxes would cut a strange figure in the hodge podge of literary currents of to-day; yet the writers who are now most popular are the closest perusers of Browne’s “universal manuscript, Nature.”

The opening sentences of this article are transcripts of some of the opinions regarding Browne's second literary guide, the King James Bible. But are they true? Are modern writers really so negligent of a book that has moulded the styles of many of their ancestors for three centuries? The matter seemed worth investigation. So I sent letters to a group of prominent American writers, frankly asking them their impressions of the situation. After all, they are the only ones who can positively *know*. And they answered with a candor, and a sincerity, and a completeness that are surprising. Their answers do not always agree. Writers are very individualistic persons. At least, they do put upon record their own individual experiences with the King James Bible, and thus, perhaps for the first time, present an opportunity really to determine what the book of books means to American writers of to-day.

II

The writers whom I queried are of all sorts, and represent practically every type of writing now being done in America. Novelists, short story writers, essayists, critics, historians, philosophers, journalists, poets—all are represented by the names best known to the American reading public. Let them speak for themselves!

Hendrick Willem van Loon writes from his home in Holland: "The King James version means very little in my life because it was not until my twentieth year that I discovered that God had not written the Bible originally in the vernacular of the delegates to the Synod of Dordrecht. The Dutch version was pretty terrible except to those who had heard it read since they were six years old and who associated it with holiness and hard pews and the peaceful slumbers of their ancestral churches.

"Why waste your time on this sort of thing?" he continues. "You know that everybody will tell you how much they loved their King James version. Personally the laws of Hammarabi and several Egyptian hieroglyphics read just as interestingly. A new version by George Moore¹ might be something and a Bible by Hemingway would not be a bad investment."

A letter which was briefer, but just as spicy as that from Mr.

¹This was written before George Moore's death.

van Loon, came from Carl van Doren. "Most prose writers who say they have studied the Bible and modeled their style on it are, I believe, liars."

Most readers of *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* will not be surprised to find that Thornton Wilder was "brought up in a home with Bible readings", and "attended school with compulsory Bible classes at Chepoo, China, and Oberlin College." He has not consciously studied the stylistic qualities of the Bible, but acknowledges the "immense influence exercised by such close acquaintance with the Bible—diction, cadence, simplicity in narrative."

Ida M. Tarbell and Charles Beard have both read in the Bible "extensively", but have not tried to imitate its style. Stewart Edward White answers obliquely, saying, "I have, of course, experienced great admirations . . . That includes the Bible, King James Version". Winston Churchill writes from New England to uphold the view established by tradition: "I have long thought that the purity and beauty of the English language are best expressed by the King James Version."

The poet of the mid-west, Lew Sarett, says, "I have studied the Bible, King James Version, carefully. I was interested especially in its literary beauty, in the factors that contribute to the nobility, power, and economy of its expression. I have reread at least a hundred times 'The Sermon on the Mount' for its literary and persuasive values, and Solomon's 'Song of Songs' for its unparalleled beauty, its fervor, its vividness of imagery, and its sensuousness.

"I have consciously studied the stylistic qualities of portions of the Bible. I have never tried to use the elements, of its style. But I respond so deeply to those portions, particularly the two I have mentioned, that perhaps unconsciously I have been influenced by them somewhat."

Robert Herrick, the novelist, writes from his home in Maine that he considers this sort of a study "futile and the generalizations worthless." He says, however, "Having been brought up in the Episcopalian Church, I have from early years been familiar with certain parts of the Bible."

Upton Sinclair, author of *They Call me Carpenter*, says "The Bible had a great influence upon my writing. I read it continually when I was young. When I was a child I had a book called 'The

Story of the Bible'; I do not remember who prepared it, but it kept very much of the Bible language. In my student days, I read both the Old and New Testaments through in English, and I read the New Testament half a dozen times in Latin, once in Greek, and once in German, as a part of my study of those languages. I do not remember any conscious study of its style. My ideas of style were acquired for the most part without definitely thinking about it. The best parts of the Bible have something worthwhile to say, and they say it as clearly and simply as possible, and that is to me the essence of a good style, and the kind I strove to acquire so far as I was conscious of the process."

Rupert Hughes writes, "Since childhood I have been a constant student of the Bible in all its versions. As I lost my belief in the inspiration or even the truthfulness of the texts as revealed religion, I have perhaps come to admire all the more the ingenuity and fervor of the authors as authors."

A letter expressive of his own personality comes from E. W. Howe, fiery newspaper editor, and author of the last-generation classic, *The Story of a Country Town*. "My father was a backwoods Methodist preacher, and so religious I became prejudiced against the Bible (as a youth.) As an adult I have not read it except in pieces; I am familiar with it largely from hearing it talked about or written about. I do not especially admire the style of the writers."

Hamlin Garland has read the Bible "from Kivver to Kivver", as the old people used to say. The old King James version was our Bible and both my grandsires were students of it. They knew it almost by heart . . . As I grew toward manhood I heard much talk of its noble simplicity. I doubt if it influenced me directly, but indirectly it undoubtedly served as a corrective to the vernacular of my neighbors and the slovenly English of the press."

Zona Gale read in the King James Bible "virtually daily, from 14 to 16 years of age—Thereafter frequently to twenty years . . . I have made use for title—"The Odor of the Ointment", 'A Fountain of Gardens,' etc., in early writing. And of phrases from Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Revelation, and the Gospels . . .

"I think that the influence of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament has been most important to me in the suggestion of

themes for stories or articles, arising usually from a single phrase, ('Such knowledge is too wonderful for me'—'joying in his habitable world,' etc.),—rather than for style, at least consciously undertaken."

An entirely different influence was felt by another woman novelist, Mrs. Bess Streeter Aldrich. "The question brings me a reminiscent mood," she said. "Born of a pioneer mother who was deeply religious, I have no earlier recollection than her deep-throated voice intoning the majestic lines of the Psalms. I can hear it yet: 'Oh, Lord, how manifold are thy works. In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches'. The lilting words meant more to me as poetry than as any statement of religious fervor.

"She seemed to half sing the verses,—they accompanied my whole childhood as a deep-toned organ accompanies a service. This—more than any study of the Bible on my own part—has had its influence on my writing. Sometimes as I work, if perchance there comes a musically turned sentence, it seems in some queer way to be connected with that long-silenced intonation of the Psalms. One hesitates to set down in cold and often cruel black and white the experiences of the heart. But something about my mother's sincere religious nature, the rhythm of the verses she recited from memory, the majesty of the Biblical language as she repeated it, has never left me. Does this early influence help me write? I do not know. All I know is that when I have agonized over a clumsy sentence and have finally turned it into something satisfying, for the brief fraction of a moment I have a feeling of oneness with that deep-throated singing of the Psalms.

"This, more than any study of the stylistic qualities of the Bible, has influenced me."

Edwin Markham writes, "I have read the King James version of the Bible since I was a shepherd boy on the Suisin Hills in central California. I began by reading the Gospels of Jesus, and I soon saw that they were not merely theological documents, but were political documents with a vast social and industrial aim. These Gospels coupled with *The Man Who Laughs* by Victor Hugo were my chief inspirations when I wrote *The Man With the Hoe*. They were constantly in the background of my mind.

"Yes, I have consciously studied the style of the great prophets. Undoubtedly the remarkable simplicity and directness of those masters of speech helped greatly to fashion my style in both prose and verse."

Will Durant says concisely that he has "read the Vulgate through. Am now reading the Revised Version through." He has not studied its stylistic qualities. Ernest Poole had read the Bible "mainly as a child and in school or at college, but have read again to some extent in the last ten years."

H. L. Mencken declares, "I have been familiar with the King James version for many years; in fact, since I began to read at all. I have also read all of the more modern English versions, but greatly prefer the King James."

"I can recall giving it no conscious study, but reading the book has naturally influenced my choice of words and, to some extent, the rhythm of my writing."

"I was compelled to study the Bible in Sunday School", writes Max Eastman, "where I did not feel it to be true history, and yet did not approach it as poetry. I merely disliked it as an affliction and was thus deprived of its affirmative influence in any direction." Since then he has read it but little, "until the last few months."

III

Generalizations, as Mr. Herrick said, would be futile. They are not necessary. Each writer has spoken clearly for him or her self. One conclusion at least may be reached. The scoffers can no longer have it all their own way. There are many contemporary writers who find the King James Bible as powerfully moving as it has been in any age. And the literary tide is not set hopelessly toward what Mr. Irving Babbitt calls naturalism. Apparently there is still a strong current in American literature which is setting in the direction of purposive writing. Call it didactic, call it moralistic, call it prophetic—the evidence is here, in the letters of these popular and representative American authors, that it exists. And among the older writers who are here represented is a sprinkling of younger men, who give a promise that the current will continue and will, perhaps, in time, come again to dominate the stream.

by John A. Holmes

TAKE HOME THIS HEART

Take home this heart. It has been lost.
It has been wandering in the world alone,
Inland and seaward, hill, and cape, and coast,
Seeking a home and altar of its own.

I looked at waves; at clouds; at sunlit stone;
In fire at its imaginary view.
The weather-vane said where the wind had gone.
The waves had much to say, but nothing new.

I rubbed the colors of the world away.
Nothing was left but form, and that was strange,—
Not human, for I saw it would not die,
But last forever, and forever change.

I went toward sunlight, where the wisest go.
I saw such life contending with such death
I cut the hateful paradox in two,—
Then in the sudden cold I caught my breath,

And learned the truth. I seized the severed ends.
With fingers numb I tied the precious knot.
Mortality lay certain in my hands,
The simple answer so profoundly sought.

The streets are false and foreign where we go.
The hills mean nothing you and I can guess.
The new year wheels the colored seasons through—
Not to reward us, or to bruise, or bless,

But as antiphony to all our thought,
Inevitable and universal voice,
Whether we grieve or laugh, or love, or not,
Or murder or beget, and so rejoice.

Let all our thought be of each other now,
Gentle as time is not; and be so plain,
So patient in our love, that each will know
His fear of mortal loneliness is vain.

I listened north and west for natural words,
But nothing spoke by day or sang by night,
Nothing, from leafy earth, or heaven starred,
Like human wrath and wisdom and delight.

Take home my heart, then, into yours,
And light the waiting fire, and close the doors.

And let me in the firelight touch your face,
And tell you love has led me to this place.

by Eron Dunbar Rowland

BOUNTY

Heaven never gave to man
Better than of Love a need,
Thus assuring him
A Creed.

by Antonia Y. Schwab

PORTRAIT OF A LADY

She walks beneath magnolia trees,
Where large, enamelled leaves
Bend toward her as she treads, magnificent
In poise-proud of her descent.
Brilliants sharp and white
Are on her fingers. Brilliants worn in light
Of candelabra. Upon her stiff brocade
Are bits of jade
Once hid' in panelled walls of Fontainbleau.
There is the flow
Of Guises in her blood, the rumor
And whisper of intrigue, the humour
Of politics in her frozen smile
The vile,
Craft of the Guises in her word
Which cuts men like a sword.
Thus she muses in the dusk where magnolia bloom
Are candles in the gloom,
Are candles by a broken wall
Beside a house demolished, ruined, where rafters fall.

by Eron Dunbar Rowland

ASSURANCE

Since man has come
Thus far,
To find Love in his heart,
Song on his lips,
Why should he doubt
North Star?

by William S. Knickerbocker

FOR PEACOCKS BUT NOT FOR PRUDES

SWINBURNE'S LITERARY CAREER AND FAME. By Clyde Kenneth Hyder. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press. 1933. Pp. 388.

Not only does this sprightly book illumine the personality of the last of the Shelleyans but it is a useful corrective of the popular notion of the complacency of the Victorians who refused to accept the exhibitionism of a gifted aristocrat because he violated the accepted code of decency. Dr. Hyder's book is a carefully compiled gloss of critical response to Swinburne's poetry from 1860 to the present; and since Swinburne deliberately framed his verse with an intention to shock and outrage, the response he received is an indication of his success. The book, in short, is a contribution to the history of Victorian taste in one of its aspects; and that a major one.

Victorian poetry, in large measure, was a redaction of the themes and techniques experimentally discovered by some of the poets of the first quarter of the nineteenth century: by Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Shelley, and Coleridge. The poets of Victoria's reign who followed them had the dilemma of continuing their experimentation in theme or technique (or in both); or in retrenchment and reform, solidifying their gains. Shelley with Keats seemed to contend with Wordsworth and Coleridge for supremacy in Victorian esteem. The pathetic destiny of Thomas Lovell Beddoes with his "Death's Jest Book" seemed to sound the knell of that haunting music which Shelley the skylark liberated from the essences of silence: Browning's "Pauline" was a tiny tinkle of a Shelleyan echo to be muffled in "Paracelsus", that abortive effort at an English *Faust*, in the Goethean manner: Tennyson's "The Palace of Art" achieved the fusion between Shelleyan melodism and Keatsian imagism in a hedonistic intention, only to be suppressed before the poem was finished, by the bony finger of rugged duty exhumed from the least effective of Wordsworth's poems. It was Tennyson's great achievement to

arrest temporarily the push of the soul of British poesie towards pure beauty. Browning's rugged, radical verse—for better or for worse—was the shadow that stalked Tennyson's popularity until the breakdown of Tennysonianism in the work of the vers-librists and the current "metaphysicals" or neo-Donneans.

Swinburne was in the major tradition of Anglo-French poetry and, though sharing with Tennyson the unearthly music of Shelley, remained in the porphyry palace of pain. Wizard of words, he knew their traumatic effects when melodiously fused in a succession, a fluency, of syllabication; and lured by the hypnotic delights of swarming, twilightish images. Liberty and lust, pain and putrefaction, sin and sleep—around these his passions and his poems plied in a wild and bacchantic paean. Yet he was not, like Shelley, an original. He was a sensitive violin whose strings fiercely vibrated to chords set in motion by Rossetti, Hugo, Baudelaire, and the members of the exquisite group with whom he personally mingled. More facile, more voluminous, more voluptuous than his predecessors or compeers, he had the aristocrat Shelley's aristocratic audacity; and without Shelley's Platonism he prolonged by an eschatologic miracle the pagan sensuousness of Keats, without Keats' wholesomeness and health. He was the incarnation of Beddoes' Death's Jest Book; but though he, too, had his little imitators like Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson, and Francis Thompson, his art could not endure against the more masculine and hearty robustness of Browning's art; nor against the earnest, realistic, more truly apocalyptic vision of Hardy.

In spite of the pale, ineffectual taper of Mr. T. S. Eliot whose clandestine *amours* with the genius of Swinburne are revealed by his reverent hushed tones whenever he has occasion to speak of him (to say nothing of Swinburnian effects in his most famous poems), Swinburne to-day seems so far away—like fading lights on a misty marsh. Even his poetic lecheries are too indistinct to be satisfying: his erotic swellings seem bloated like pocked yellow deadly *amanitas* which need but to be touched with the toe of one's shoe to topple and break. Consequently, much of what we read in Dr. Hyder's book—the quotations from Swinburne's contemporary critics—is nearer to our attitude than are the sickly adulations of those who have the desire, but not the courage nor the opportunity, to gloat in the puffings of flesh. John Morley

uttered, if not our contemporary disgust, our boredom with Swinburne when he said in his famous review: [Swinburne] "has revealed to the world a mind all aflame with the feverish carnality of a schoolboy over the dirtiest passages in Lemprière." And Morley said the last word on Swinburne when he defined that passion as "the spurious passion of a putrescent imagination".

Still, the historical importance of Swinburne in altering poetic sensibility is made clear in Dr. Hyder's book in a pleasing and almost colloquial style. Though it is true that Rossetti later drew the fire of prudish Victorians in the cruel essay by Robert Buchanan ("The Fleshly School of Poetry"), Swinburne by his audacity and persistence bore the brunt of the assault on the cult of passion and succeeded, through his fortitude, in wearing down his opponents. He was not alone in altering the Victorian aesthetic-ethical equilibrium which may be expressed in the conflict of Duty versus Beauty (or, to repeat Arnold's perfect phrases on this matter, "strictness of conscience" versus "spontaneity of consciousness") but he provides for us of today a convenient center of attention or point of disintegration at which we may discern the disturbance of the harmony between ethics and aesthetics which Tennyson achieved. He is also convenient historically as the poet whose *technique* and conception of verse is so radically different from that of our contemporary minor poets—those radical experimenters profiting from the successful poetic rebellion of 1912—who have lost the ear for music, the eye for visual images, and the sensibility which supplies the architectonics of meaning: poets, that is to say, like Ezra Pound, E. E. Cummings, Marianne Moore, and Allen Tate. Their revolt is a revolt, immediate or remote, against Swinburnian melodism and hypnotics.

Dr. Hyder's critical comment on Swinburne's achievements, his defects, his indebtedness, leaves much to be desired. His failure to discriminate critically between what is adequate in the Victorian comments of reviewers and critics on the work of Swinburne is glaring. He leaves the puerile impression that most of the first adverse critics of the golden-haired sadist were wrong *because* they were Victorians. But his book, nevertheless, is important and needed badly to be done; if not as a commentary on Swinburne then as a contribution to a more exact knowledge of the history of Victorian sensibility.

by Frederick Horner Bunting

THE SANE DOLLAR

DOLLARS. By Lionel D. Edie. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934. \$2.50.

The uninitiated in monetary problems will not be able to grasp the message of this book in its entirety, and the financial expert may feel that the argument is frequently over-simplified. But the informed layman should enjoy it and most certainly ought to read it.

Dr. Edie writes clearly and well: his thought processes are neither involved nor dramatic; he rests his case neither on tiresome statistics nor cheap rhetoric, his proposals are obscured neither by unnecessary footnotes nor by obfuscating journalistic style. All of which is no small achievement. He champions what he calls a middle of the road policy of monetary management, disclaiming the necessity and the advisability both of resorting to the Commodity Dollar scheme and of falling back upon the old gold standard, in the effort to attain reasonable stability of prices and a fair balance in the incomes of the two major divisions of our economic structure—Agriculture and Industry.

It is not advisable to give serious consideration to the Commodity Dollar scheme, he says, because the American people want a metallic base for their monetary structure, in which gold shall play the primary rôle. Neither should policy-makers plan upon going back to pre-depression gold standard, because the American public now knows that standard to be incapable of staving off disastrous booms and depressions. The American people want a "sane" dollar, and Dr. Edie is entirely at one with their desire. For these reasons he mentions but does not discuss in detail the alternative to a "sane" dollar (e.g. Commodity Dollar, Bi-metallism, etc.) the discussion is confined, rather, to an exposition of the nature of this 'sane' dollar, the reasons why it is inevitable and at the same time desirable, and its relative importance compared to non-monetary factors.

His perspective of the economic scene is stated thus: (pp. 4, 5.) "Monetary power has shifted from independent financial authority to political authority, and this political authority is under strong pressure to help the country to rise above its heavy domestic burden of public and private debt. The task involves at the outset a reconstruction of the gold standard and a redetermination of the international position of the dollar. In addition to the task of rebuilding an international monetary standard, there is the task of establishing a domestic monetary policy. Such a policy does not rest upon monetary factors alone but requires a program of coördination of non-monetary factors with monetary. The execution of the policy can best be achieved by coöperation between central banks, and particularly between the Federal Reserve and the Bank of England."

It is plain, then, as regards the domestic monetary policy, that Dr. Edie takes a stand directly between two schools of thought, the one saying that we must look for a solution of the problem by attending to industrial (non-monetary) maladjustments; the other holding that the problem can be adequately dealt with by manipulation of the currency and credit factors alone. Both monetary and non-monetary factors must be coördinated, says Dr. Edie, if we are to have stability in the domestic price-level and a fair balance between Agricultural and Industrial prices.

The A.A.A., the N.I.R.A., and the P.W.A. were efforts to bring this balance about, and on the whole the author considers them as right and reasonable attempts, though by no means yet perfectly worked out. He believes they will remain, in amended form, because they have (p. 184) "improved the stability of the internal structure of prices."

The author's chief concern, however, is the more strictly monetary factor, and the bulk of the book is devoted to the internal and external aspects of this factor.

The cardinal points in his constructive monetary suggestions may be found in his American Gold Program (p. 87 *et seq.*) and in the Reconstructed Gold Standard (p. 275 *et seq.*) The main difference between his proposed gold standard and the old gold standard are brought out in three of these points. The first would prohibit the purchase of gold in the open market by any persons other than Central Banks (for monetary purposes), and enjoins all nations to take all gold coin and gold certificates out of cir-

ulation. The second would require the Central Banks of the world to exert a positive effort to prevent wide fluctuations in the general price-level by means of Open Market transactions and the Bank Rates. The third demands that the principal countries devise ways and means of checking excessive migratory movements of liquid capital across national boundaries so as to prevent "abrupt withdrawals of gold on a scale such as to jeopardize the maintenance of the gold standard."

There is, it should be noted, nothing new in these proposals, with the possible exception of the last point mentioned. But the vigor of Dr. Edie's attack on the inadequacies of the old gold standard adds to their potency and attractiveness. He shows that the Central Bankers (*e.g.* Bank of England and Federal Reserve) who directed things under the old gold standard were guided, or rather misguided, by a philosophy of "automatism". They made little attempt to prevent the excessive flow of gold and capital between countries, they allowed gold to circulate wastefully internationally, and they made what were at best half-hearted attempts to prevent gyrations in the internal price-levels. The implication is clear that almost any change from the old system must be a change for the good.

This reviewer is in hearty agreement with the general trend of Dr. Edie's thought, both as regards the strictures he makes of the old system and his proposals for a new one. There are, however, several things about his programme which are considered either too briefly or vaguely. The whole thing, for instance, depends for its success very largely on the willingness of the several important Central Banks to coöperate as they never have before. Now, since Dr. Edie set out to tell 'what the dollar will be worth', he ought to tell us what effect the unwillingness of the Central Banks to coöperate will have on the dollar's future value. All he says on this subject is that America should remain dollar-independent until agreement is reached as to what the new gold ratios of the currencies shall be.

Again, if the public is to understand and to support his programme, a much more thorough treatment than can be found in *Dollars* of the power which Central Banks can exert on the expansion of production should be given. For doubts as to their ability to do such a thing have been expressed, within the past decade, by no less formidable bankers than the late Governor

Strong of the Federal Reserve and Sir Montagu Norman, Governor of the Bank of England. So it might not have been amiss for the author to have allotted a short chapter on the history and theory of Open Market Transactions and the Bank Rate. His discussion of these things in the chapter, *The Trusteeship for Gold*, is hardly sufficient.

Dr. Edie has, nevertheless, outlined not only a "sane" dollar but a sane and practicable monetary system for the world.

by *S. Ichiye Hayakawa*

MR. ELIOT'S AUTO DA FE

AFTER STRANGE GODS. By T. S. Eliot; London, Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1934. N. Y., Harcourt, Brace Co. Pp. 72. 1934.

The follower of T. S. Eliot's reputation remembers the alarm and scorn with which numbers of his young disciples repudiated his leadership upon the publication of *For Launcelot Andrewes*. Mr. Eliot became overnight, as he himself pointed out with dry amusement, a lost leader, or perhaps a lost lamb. Those who had read, with excitement and enthusiasm *The Waste Land*, suddenly dug their heels into the ground, and refused to be led into the land beyond where, in the rich spiritual significance of the Christian tradition, Mr. Eliot found the fructifying principle, the abundance of "water" that our waste land lacked. Some of us, however, slower to reject a leader from whom we had learned so much, have followed patiently and loyally, and have discovered much that we needed to know by reading, more sympathetically than we could have done without his stimulation, the religious writers whom he recommended. All thoughtful Americans, nourished (or undernourished) in the dry Protestant tradition of liberals like Channing and Puritans like Edwards, owe to Mr. Eliot an enormous debt. He restored theology to us as a living

subject so that, perhaps for the first time in almost a hundred years, it has become no uncommon thing for young literati here and there throughout America to discuss in perfect seriousness such subjects as Grace, Redemption, Original Sin, and Sacramentalism. Mr. Eliot lost many followers when he announced himself as Anglo-Catholic, but what his influence has lost in extent, it has at least partially gained in intensity.

To one who has sat unashamed at Mr. Eliot's feet for years, his latest volume is perplexing and distressing. The result of the discovery of a set of positive religious beliefs, one has always been led to imagine (even from *The Waste Land*), is a heightening of experience: the pleasurable or the admirable becomes Good, the disagreeable or the misdirected becomes Evil. Values cease to be relative and acquire a divine sanction which makes possible the difference between the sacred and the profane. Life becomes at once more dramatic; acts which are variously termed "indiscreet", "unfortunate," "anti-social," become Sin; Good becomes a source of positive joy. Religious belief is an intensification of life, so one had gathered from great religious writers, which replaces regret with remorse, complacency with joy, and stoicism with serenity.

It is therefore disconcerting for the ardent student of Eliot to find, in this most recent book, no indication of a richer spiritual life as the result of his conversion. The naïve ebullitions of the recent convert were, of course, not expected; but one (not unnaturally) hoped for some sweetening of temper, some increase in graciousness and mercy, from one who had accepted the religion of Him who cried, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." *After Strange Gods*, which announces itself as "A Primer of Modern Heresy", far from showing any enrichment of Mr. Eliot's life, indicates on the contrary an increasingly fastidious (perhaps it would be more accurate to say pernicky) disapproval of men, manners, and ideas. I would not for a moment suggest that there are not things in the modern world that ought rightly to be disapproved of; however, it is profoundly indicative of the peculiarities of Mr. Eliot's temper that he has found in Christianity a convenient platform from which to indulge his favorite pastime of deploring (to use a favorite word of his), instead of a river of life from which to irrigate and fructify his waste land. Distasteful as such an obvious line of explanation is

to an admirer of Eliot, one finds difficulty in escaping the conclusion that he has inherited from his New England ancestry and background so strong a habit of disapproving that he can make no greater progress in Christianity than to advance from witch-hunting to heresy-hunting.

There is little to quarrel with in Mr. Eliot's judgments of individual authors. Of Katherine Mansfield's story *Bliss*, he writes, "We are given neither comment nor suggestion of any moral issue of good and evil, and within the setting this is quite right . . . the social and moral ramifications are outside the terms of reference. As the material is limited in this way—and indeed our satisfaction recognizes the skill with which the author has handled perfectly the *minimum* material—it is what I believe would be called feminine." This is an excellent explanation of the peculiarly expert smallness of Katherine Mansfield's work. Professor Irving Babbitt indeed "seemed to be trying to compensate for the lack of living tradition by a herculean, but purely intellectual and individual effort", although to quarrel with his "addiction to the philosophy of Confucius" seems unfair—it was a respect, or, if you will, an attachment, but certainly not an "addiction." Again, Mr. Eliot is right in pointing out the "powerful and narrow post-Protestant prejudice" that "peeps out from the most unexpected places" in the work of Ezra Pound. Mr. Eliot's summary of the progress William Butler Yeats has made towards greatness, overcoming "the greatest odds", will find few dissenters. Especially brilliant is Mr. Eliot's analysis of the weakness of Hardy: "It is only, indeed, in their emotional paroxysms that most of Hardy's characters come alive. This extreme emotionalism seems to me a symptom of decadence; it is a cardinal point of faith in a romantic age, to believe that there is something admirable in violent emotion for its own sake, whatever the emotion or whatever its object. But it is by no means self-evident that human beings are the most real when most violently excited; violent physical passions do not in themselves differentiate men from each other, but rather tend to reduce them to the same state." "What again and again introduces a note of falsity into Hardy's novels is that he will leave nothing to nature, but will always be giving one last turn of the screw himself, and of his motives for so doing I have the gravest suspicion." Mr. Eliot is not alone in entertaining these suspicions; and if Hardy has ever failed to arouse suspicions as to the purity

of his motives himself, his admirers have done so for him. In opposing to these writers who face imperfectly the problems of life, James Joyce, as the one contemporary artist who approaches the central problem of good and evil in a "traditional" and "Christian" manner, Mr. Eliot has triumphantly demonstrated that Joyce, whatever his virtues or shortcomings, has been both acclaimed and reviled for the wrong reasons. In a real sense Joyce is central while Lawrence and Hardy are peripheral.

Mr. Eliot's literary perceptions, which read accurately into the meanings of the authors he deals with, are extraordinarily acute, and their acuteness is sharpened by his ethical sensitivity. Tradition is, according to him, "a way of feeling or acting which characterizes a group throughout generations; and . . . it must largely be, or . . . many of the elements in it must be, unconscious." Mr. Eliot, who is as richly cosmopolitan in his learning as Babbitt or Pound, has a genuinely traditional way of feeling about literature: his erudition and his sensitive reading have given him a European background, a European tradition, the lack of which has made possible the many and various heresies of the modern world which he rightly deplores. The heresies which are uttered in the name of self-expression, nationalism, romanticism, science, and society, would be impossible, if a unified "way of feeling" based upon the past experience of the race had a more lively existence. We are sadly in need of traditional men, in Mr. Eliot's sense. "They say a dead man's hand cures swellings, if laid on them," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes. "There is nothing like the dead cold hand of the Past to take down our tumid egotism and lead us into the solemn flow of the life of our race." Our society is, in Mr. Eliot's words, "worm-eaten with Liberalism". Mr. Eliot demonstrates, in his own literary criticism, the advantages of a traditional literary culture as a safeguard against erratic and half-formed ideas.

Unfortunately, Mr. Eliot does not come to us in these lectures as a literary critic; he writes, "I ascended the platform of these lectures only in the rôle of moralist". Therefore the social implications of his definition of tradition become matters of great importance in his book. It is here that Eliot reveals prejudices that distinctly mark his thought as, in some respects, "trifling and eccentric", "provincial in time and place", to use his own terms of derogation.

In order to develop tradition, Eliot maintains, after quite a bit of unnecessarily prolix explanation of what tradition is and is not, "The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely either to be fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate. [Here he adds in a footnote, "Or else you get a *caste* system, based on original distinctions of race, as in India . . ."] What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any number of free-thinking Jews undesirable. There must be a proper balance between urban and rural, industrial and agricultural development. And a spirit of excessive tolerance is to be deprecated. We must also remember that . . . the local community must always be the most permanent, and that the concept of the nation is by no means fixed and invariable . . . It is only a law of nature, that local patriotism, when it represents a distinct tradition and culture, takes precedence over a more abstract national patriotism."

Mr. Eliot is here obviously talking about a very different thing from the tradition the absence of which induces the many heresies he attacks. In a passage such as the above, he is talking about local tradition—not even a national; he addresses his Southern audience and tells them they are in a good position to develop tradition. A comparatively homogeneous population, a homogeneous culture, a smaller degree of industrialization, a comparative freedom from adulterant immigration, are Southern advantages. Obviously these are advantages toward the perpetuation of local eccentricities and local virtues, in short of a local tradition. But is this the tradition that has enriched Mr. Eliot's own background? Is this the tradition that enables him to "correct taste" and to avoid "heresy"? Obviously not. One need not belittle the value of local tradition to point out the fact that Mr. Eliot is what he is at his best because of the enriching power, not of local, but of general European tradition. Mr. Eliot is a civilized Occidental, whose traditions derive, in unimportant matters, from St. Louis, Mo., perhaps, or Cambridge, Mass., but in important essentials, from all the cultivated Western world, from Judaism, from Greece, from Rome, from France, Italy, Germany, England, and America at their best, in all the writers, great and small, that he absorbed in his extensive reading. This

greater tradition Mr. Eliot shares with all the best cosmopolitan minds of Europe.

Mr. Eliot confuses, it is to be feared, the tradition he desires as a moralist with that which he represents as a literary critic. The latter form of tradition most of us assest to willingly, but the former, especially in America, is not only futile, but distinctly hostile to "right living" and "right thinking". To be deploring the immigrant races at this late date, and to claim that the racial mixture immigration causes leads either to fierce cultural self-consciousness or to "adulteration" is to confess to the same sort of "native American" inferiority-complex that gives rise to such organizations as the D. A. R., the U. D. C., and the Society of Mayflower Descendents. "Fierce self-consciousness" is merely an unfortunate stage (which some New Englanders are still in) through which different peoples in the same land pass during the process of fusion, or, if you prefer, "adulteration". We in the Middle West have an "adulterated Scandinavian-German-English-American culture. Perhaps we ought not to call it a "culture" yet. Nevertheless, American civilization is going to be built upon such adulterations, both of race and religion, and the advocacy of any sort of "tradition" that is not based upon a recognition of this fact is anachronistic, "eccentric". To speak of "race" as if one meant by that term the Anglo-Saxon or "Nordic" race is "provincial". In furthering any racial tradition at the present time, the least thing one can intelligently mean is the European race, as opposed to, let us say, the Asiatic race. A "number of free-thinking Jews" is "undesirable" only if race and religion are meant in a way that is distinctly "provincial in time and place".

Perhaps this gives us a clew to some of the things that have disturbed us about Mr. Eliot's work even at times when we have admired him most: his frequently stuffy archepiscopal manner, his contempt of his readers, his scorn of all contemporary authors (no matter how excellent) who have in any way achieved a wide popular acclaim. Enthusiastic as we have been about his work, there are few of us who have not ground our teeth at one time or another at some of his mannerisms. He has the irritating habit of explaining at great length things that are obvious to the reasonably cultivated reader, and the accompanying habit of saying in a subordinate clause (or in a parenthesis) things that really need further elaboration or explanation. (It might be remarked here

that one could not help suspecting Mr. Eliot of taking malicious delight in the fact that the "explanatory" notes to *The Waste Land* did not explain.) In *After Strange Gods*, his mannerisms have become accentuated (partly, perhaps, because the essays were lectures), and there is an amazing increase in the number of cautionary phrases such as "I do not mean that . . ." "What I really mean is that . . ." "My main point here is to show . . ." "I hope it is quite clear that . . ." "I am very far from asserting that . . ." "It will already have been observed that . . ." etc., etc. There is, in the sum-total of these mannerisms which always mark Mr. Eliot's prose, an unmistakable condescension, a superciliousness toward his readers.

These stylistic eccentricities, like the eccentricities of his social and moral views just examined, are trifling and personal. If they merely trespassed momentarily upon our enjoyment of his splendid literary criticism, they would cause little concern. But they go more deeply than that. The snobbery that these eccentricities reveal explains why the negative aspects of belief, the persecution of errors and heresies, are more congenial to him than the positive aspects of belief—joy and serenity and cheerful labor in the vineyards of the Lord. It is surely not without significance that "deplore" and "deprecate" are his favorite verbs. (It is unpleasant to bring such a charge as that of snobbery to Mr. Eliot; it is done, therefore, with the greatest reluctance, and, I hope, in the true spirit of humility which he enjoins to us.) It is devoutly to be hoped therefore, that as Mr. Eliot spends more years in the fellowship of the Son, Divine Mercy will enlarge his sympathies and sweeten his temper. Mr. Eliot is a great writer; for all his eccentricities, it is not without reason that everything he says and writes commands the immediate and respectful attention of the entire English-speaking world. One looks forward, therefore, to his next book with keenest interest; the general expectation is, of course, that he will grow narrower and more disapproving in tone as he grows older. But Christ has worked miracles before.

by Donald MacCampbell

MEMNON HIMSELF

TREATISE ON RIGHT AND WRONG. By H. L. Mencken. New York: Alfred Knopf, Inc. 1934.

Although this book purports to be a companion volume to *A Treatise on the Gods*, it nevertheless marks a definite step in advance of the earlier publication. To be sure one finds here—as in all of this author's work—a crude and shameless disregard for the niceties of English prose, but then the readers of Mr. Mencken have no doubt come by this time to accept without a whimper his inviolable devotion to the standards of modern journalism, knowing that not until he ceases to lift his pen will he cease to split his infinitives. The change to which I make reference appears rather in the author's attitude toward expression than toward form, and one has only to glance through the first few pages of this new book in order to mark its presence: a certain atmosphere of sobriety enshrouds one from the start, and as one reads on the utter absence of East Side vaudeville is discovered with increasing surprise. Indeed the distinguished American iconoclast seems almost to have lost the use of his venomous tongue, or is it simply that he is resting it between performances? Is it simply that he has temporarily removed the bells and motley—from behind which his most mordant observations have invariably sprung—and is amusing himself with a few serious thoughts by means of intellectual relaxation? This were difficult to ascertain, but at any rate the *Treatise on Right and Wrong* makes manifest a comparatively unknown side of Mr. Mencken's cerebral cortex, and on turning the pages one is almost at a loss to justify the writer's profession of faith in such puritan ideals as monogamous marriages, mental indeterminism, and traditional moral standards.

"Polygamy," writes the famous protagonist of freedom, "save as an occasional day-dream, is hardly an inclination of the ma-

jority of civilized adults", and Bertrand Russell's completely uninhibited individuals are to be encountered "only in lunatic asylums and in the literature of psychoanalysis." Furthermore, despite a seeming let-down in moral codes, there is as yet "no evidence of a general departure from the moral norms established on earth since time immemorial. The five basic evils—murder, adultery, theft, trespass, and false witness—are still held to be evils everywhere, and the most we are seeking is a somewhat muddled effort to redefine them in harmony with the changing needs of mankind." Regarding the question of determinism, it is to be observed that "the mind, as it is emancipated from the immemorial shackles of vain wishing and romantic believing, takes on a greater and greater freedom, but the will, as we study it, seems to be less and less a prime mover, and more and more a function of forces below the conscious level. As a practical matter, we have to assume that it is more or less free—if not quite as free as the mind, then at least sufficiently so to support the work of priest and hangman. This pragmatic doctrine of its freedom, though large doubts may linger, yet undoubtedly works better than determinism."

These are strange words for the notorious "blond ogre of Baltimore", words which at once ally him, ironically enough, with many of his most inveterate enemies—including Holy Church, the Courts of Law, and worst of all the ubiquitous Philistine whose approach to life is so essentially pragmatic. And yet, if we pause to analyse the situation, Mr. Mencken could not very well have asserted himself on the side with the modernists. Were he to speak forth in defence of rigid determinism—as he would probably like to do—how then could he justify his own colorful career as an iconoclast? Assuming that people cannot be different, would any but the most sadistic fanatic abuse them for being what they are? Perhaps Mr. Mencken, in choosing his strange allies, has been forced against his better judgment to do so in order to lend a semblance of consistency to what, one suspects, has always been a most flagrantly insincere professional philosophy. Shattering the idols of the defenceless masses has until recent years been a profitable business in this country, but the tide is turning at last, and even the *American Mercury* is now losing subscriptions with astounding rapidity—was losing them,

in fact, even before Mr. Mencken stepped out of the editorial offices. The present tendency—one which has no doubt been appreciably abetted by the economic depression—is to debunk the debunkers, and Mr. Mencken, it seems, has wisely decided to fold up his tent like the Arabs. Most of the idols of the past have by this time been shattered and it is now high time that some effort is made to recast the fragments. This is most certainly what our critic has in mind when he pays his humble respects to progress in the closing pages of this book. "There is in fact," he writes, "such a thing as progress, and many of the new values that it brings in are authentic and durable. The problem before mankind is to discover trustworthy criteria for separating those that have truth in them from those that are mere appearance. That is not a job for the priests and politicians, the lawyers and metaphysicians who have bungled it in the past; it is a job for honest and sensible men." This, to be sure, is a reasonable enough platitude, and what is more it is really gratifying to know that Mr. Mencken has at last come to believe in the reality of honest and sensible men, even if he does not vouchsafe to tell us in what direction we should turn to find them.

Taken as a whole, the *Treatise on Right and Wrong* is disappointing. In conducting the reader through the history of moral development, Mr. Mencken is guilty of committing the very same sins against good scholarship which he has always so sorely lamented in the writings of other men: in the first place, he has simply gone with his notebook to a well-stacked library and copied from standard works on the subject such significant passages as might lend themselves readily to a rehashing. But still worse he has assembled his second-hand material in a most pedantic manner—with the inevitable result that much of it is simply unreadable. Indeed, one wonders just what sort of impulse could have prompted Mr. Mencken to undertake a task so unsuited to his natural abilities, particularly when his ultimate conclusion about morality is that "most of our worst vexations are not in the field of morals, properly so called, but in that of law."

Perhaps the best explanation is that Mr. Mencken has been driven far afield in quest of literary material. Personally I feel that he has already fulfilled his mission in America, and that his silence in the future might prove more golden than his continued

utterance. Certainly he has done much to pave the way for open-mindedness in this country, and unless in the next few years he blots out his name from her memory—by means of such tedious réchauffés as this—I confidently feel that America will remember him, and not ungratefully, in the years of her fuller maturity.

by Agatha Brown

FOLKSTER

CECIL SHARP. By A. H. Fox Strangways in collaboration with Maude Karpeles. London, Oxford Press, 1934. 233 p.

A man born on St. Cecilia's day, who could sign himself with pungent brevity $C\sharp$, was almost destined to a musical career by these facts alone. Moreover, Cecil Sharp came of a musical family, and though he was not specifically trained for the profession he later adopted, the school at which he prepared for Cambridge took music seriously, and all through his early days he was an enthusiastic amateur, though apparently, and perhaps fortunately for the particular work he was later to undertake, he was not exceptionally gifted as a performer. At any rate, on leaving the University, where he read mathematics at Clare College, in 1882 he set out for Australia to seek his fortune, and selected Adelaide as his goal "because it reminded him of his adored Beethoven song Adelaide". In the ten years he spent there, music as a profession gradually claimed him, and by the time of his return to England he had become co-Director of a conservatory, the Adelaide College of Music, and had a considerable success as a teacher.

He was over forty, however, before he found the life work for which he was singularly fitted and for which he will be remembered, the collection and dissemination of English folksong, and later folk-dance. It was almost by accident that he began this work, and the story of his pursuit of the beautiful old songs in the byways of England, and the Appalachians of this country forms the most fascinating part of the modest and straight-forward account of his life, as related by A. H. Fox Strangways and Maud Karpeles. Those who knew the songs were rapidly dying out, and it seems almost that some of these old people sat up on their deathbeds to sing the songs for Sharp to note down. Though a certain fine tact and diplomacy were necessary in order to elicit the performances, these qualities were no mean part of the equipment Sharp brought to his task, and once they had been induced to sing there was a genuine enjoyment in sharing this ancient heritage. At the back of the book are several fine pictures of sturdy, forthright types from whom Sharp was able to gather some of the best of the 5,000 songs which were his eventual harvest.

He also realized that collecting this vast amount of material then lying fallow was only the first part of the work, and that in order to reach complete fruition, what had come from the people originally must go back to the people and form part of their cultural inheritance. The founding and directing of the English Folk Song and Dance Society illustrate his unswerving character in the service of the ideal he conceived, and while to readers on this side of the water the question of whether the gospel according to Neal should prevail over that of Sharp appears academic, it shows how Sharp refused to waver from what he thought the best course for the disseminating of true folk-art. In this case it was the folk-dance, for he had been led on to attempt the resurrection of the ancient morris, sword, and country dances, and originated or adapted a form of notation so that the dances might be published and widely taught. Of the success of his effort the book gives ample evidence; the dances were introduced in the English schools, and in rest-camps during the War; during his American visits much time was spent in teaching them in various colleges.

The description of his stays in the Southern mountains has especial interest; Sharp came first in 1916, his work in England disrupted by the war and he being too old for active service. His

health had never been robust, and he was harassed by illness and the difficulty of travel in the remote sections where the songs were to be sought; but his experiences were interesting and he wrote of them with unfailing zest and good humor, as quotations from his letters evince. These chapters are written by Miss Karpeles, who as his secretary and co-worker accompanied him on the trips. His understanding and appreciation of the mountain people were genuine, and his collection of the songs of the Southern highlanders he regarded as crowning his life's work. The section on the Appalachians is prefaced by a quotation from William Blake:

"Great things are done where men and mountains meet
This is not done by jostling in the street":

it might be suggested as the ideal motto for the TVA.

The remainder of his life was filled with lecturing, teaching, and organizing, with further intervals of collecting, and he died in 1924, having, in the words of the foundation stone of Cecil Sharp House in London "Restored to the English people the songs and dances of their country."

His life has been written by two who were closely in touch with his work and the aims he sought to accomplish; the book is without frills, and rightly gives his personal life aside from his work in brief outline. It is completed by the scholarly paraphernalia of three appendices, a bibliography of his publications, and index, and is published in the usual excellent form of the Oxford Press.

by Agatha Brown

AMERICA'S TROUBADOR

STEPHEN FOSTER, *America's Troubadour*. By John Tasker Howard. N. Y., Cromwell, 1934. 445 pp.

From the obscure destiny which has enveloped the author of "Old Folks at Home", and those other songs that have passed into the very stuff of American life, Mr. Howard has effected a

gallant rescue. In a book weighted with documentary evidence, but enlivened by rich understanding and sympathy, he has evoked the piteous ghost of a man defeated by inadequate education and unreceptive environment, whose native endowment was probably greater than that of any other American composer.

The author of *Our American Music* is amply qualified to undertake a serious study of Foster's life and achievement, and with the aid of the resources of the unique and complete collection of Fosteriana gathered by Josiah K. Lilly at Foster Hall in Indianapolis has been able to refute some false impressions and clear up a number of dubious details. He traces Foster's descent, gives a full account of the lives of his parents and his many brothers and sisters—Stephen was the youngest surviving child of nine—and is at pains to verify each event of the composer's life. The result is a full and minute picture of life in Western Pennsylvania and Ohio in the first half of the nineteenth century. Political rallies, minstrel shows, steamboat trips, the informal pleasures of ordinary people, all go to fill up a colorful background.

Somewhat crudely colorful, in truth; and that there was small place for the artist in such a scene is immediately evident. Poe had learned this; his tragedy is the classic example, and in his escape from an intolerable reality he took flight to an inner realm of the fantastic to give his unique and rich contribution to literature. There is a haunting parallel between Foster and Poe, in their sheer lyric endowment as in their end, but Foster was less self-consciously the artist, more in conflict than in revolt with the spirit of his time. He did not scorn the tool it put into his hand, and gained his songs a wide hearing through the humble instrumentality of the minstrel show. But in his best work there is a nostalgia, a hunger for a different way of life, a something he had lost or never known, and it may be significant that there is doubt just when, if ever, he visited Federal Hill at Bardstown, immortalized by him as the "Old Kentucky Home".

The sardonic note of Poe is not echoed in him; in such songs of his youthful period as "Oh Susannah" and "Camptown Races" he reveals a vein of unforced bubbling nonsense, something more robust than we find in his lesser works, too often vitiated as they are by the prevailing sentimental note of the age.

Especially is this last true of the songs he wrote to the words

of others. For the most part, and in all the songs which still live today, he himself wrote the lyrics, and though it is too much to expect from one individual a double genius for music and poetry (even Wagner's poetry has been decried by some critics) unquestionably much of their esthetic appeal is grounded in the unity of effect so obtained. With Foster, melody and words were written *pari passu*, one growing out of the other. Mr. Howard's analysis of Foster's manuscript book demonstrates his method of composition clearly.

What he might have given us if there had been any place in his rather desultory education for music—it is not evident how he acquired even such technical attainments as he achieved—or if there had been an audience for the music he might then have written, it is useless to speculate. He adopted a profession for which he had never been trained, although his family was more or less "musical" in the guitar-strumming, banjo-plinking manner of their day. With all his fecundity of output, and the large sales of many of his songs, his incomings from them were precarious, and through the meticulously traced account of his dealings with his publishers Mr. Howard shows how Foster slipped deeper and deeper into financial distress. His last years, 1860-63, spent in New York, are shadowed by this, by separation from his family, and by the darker threat of a growing weakness for drink that finally contributed to his end. Tenebrous, indeed, is that final scene in the poor ward of Bellevue Hospital, with thirty-eight cents in a worn purse, and a bit of paper inscribed "Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts", the words perhaps for a last song. And yet—"The sun shines bright . . ."

by Leonard C. Bailey

BEFORE BUSSES

OLD WAYBILLS; THE ROMANCE OF THE EXPRESS COMPANIES. By Alvin F. Harlow, D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., New York and London, 1934, \$5.00. (488 pp., illustrations, bibliography, index).

Occasionally we are given the opportunity to read something which is authentic and based upon scholarly research, yet not dull and uninteresting. It is rather unfortunate that the general run of scholarly works should have as their first and most common characteristic that of dullness. It would seem that many people regard that which is interesting as probably untrue. Fortunately, Mr. Harlow did not hold to this theory when he wrote his *Old Waybills*. Scholarly it certainly is, based upon a rather staggering amount of research, with a valuable bibliography; and just as certainly it is interesting.

The scope of the book may be indicated by a few chapter headings: "The First Expression", "The Jacks and the Beanstalk", "Adams Annexes the South," "The Salad Days of the Express," "The Express Riders of '49", "Stage Robbery Becomes a Trade", "The Wars Around the Plum Tree", "The Earnest and Efficient James Boys," "Consolidation and the Air Express". The book is written in a straight-forward, rather humorous style, and is thoroughly illustrated with old photographs, drawings, and posters, and with the reproductions of old stamps and letters carried by express.

The express companies grew and flourished during one of the most interesting periods of American history, with the settlement of California and Oregon, the whole period of the development of the West and of the Civil War. Such characters as Brigham Young, Buffalo Bill, Bret Harte, Daniel Webster, and hundreds of others almost legendary in our history appear in the course of the work, in the company of more disreputable gentlemen such as the James boys, the Younger brothers, Rattlesnake Dick, Black Bart, and others of their profession.

It was an interesting period, with interesting men and interesting things to be done. The express companies were in the midst of all of it. They did as much as any other agency, probably, to develop the West. Harlow devotes much space to the story of the early Western expresses, and justifiably so.

Old Waybills is probably the best work about the express companies that has yet appeared, and it is a timely and worthwhile addition to the standard histories of the period. For anyone who is interested in the development of transportation in this country, or in the history of stage and train robberies, or in the settlement and growth of the West, this book will be valuable. For the general reader, it should prove as fascinating and entertaining as any piece of good fiction, and more profitable.

THE IDEA OF NATIONAL INTEREST. By Charles A. Beard, with the collaboration of G. H. E. Smith. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1934. Pp. ix, 583.

National "honor" and national "destiny" are still popular slogans employed to explain or justify the aims and actions of governments in world affairs. The primary object of Dr. Beard and his expert collaborators has been the attempt to formulate a tenable philosophy of this vaguely-phrased formula of national interest on the basis of fact. The result is an uncommonly comprehensive, scholarly, and highly relevant study of the course of American statesmanship, at once authoritative and keenly critical in its insights and social comprehension. The material for such a study is bewilderingly abundant, but historic research fails to yield up any clear-cut directive principle that can be said to have shaped our diplomacy. Grandiloquent sentimentality has ever marked our people as prey for interested propaganda; we have ever taken our public policies as abstractions, like "manifest destiny" and "making the world safe for democracy," and failed to relate them to group interests or the wishful thinking of uncritical minds. In fact, our political enterprises have been of a conflict-

ing nature, representing the activities of multiplying agencies and departments of government including chambers of commerce, manufacturers' associations, and the like.

While Dr. Beard holds that the concept of "national interest" in the setting of contemporary realities still awaits formulation at the hands of "a statesman as competent and powerful as Hamilton or Jefferson," he unrolls the historic dynamic impulses of American foreign policy as the development of an antithesis between the Jeffersonian agrarian particularism and the Hamiltonian Federalist-Whig-Republican ideal of industrial and financial concentration and rule; the two opposing concepts serving mainly as "frames of reference" for the clearer perception of politics and diplomacy. After tracing their historic and constitutional origins, and the course of the conflict between a policy of democratic allegiance to visible and easily controlled authorities and of economic imperialism lying at the heart of a strong central government, Dr. Beard concentrates his analysis of national interest to our territorial and commercial expansion, then to the "stakes abroad" that have shaped foreign policy, particularly in certain outstanding examples of diplomatic action in Latin America and China. "To safeguard this stake, to strengthen and increase it," he says in summary, "the whole weight of government activities has been brought into play, on the hypothesis, and no doubt the conscientious belief, that the 'national interest' is thereby advanced." This policy fostered by industrial, shipping and financial interests finally collapsed at the close of the Hoover administration, bringing with it increasing dislocation in our domestic and foreign economic structure, unemployment, paralysis, despair. But this situation cannot be mended by purely executive orders and emergency legislation. Rescue work in times of general distress is not enough. What is needful is purposive, planned, philosophic reconstruction for the adjustment of national interest to the requirements of mass production and advanced technology.

THE ROBBER BARONS. By Matthew Josephson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 1934. Pp. 474.

This history of violent enterprising men in the forty years following the Civil War is downright realistic and factual, lively and skillfully blended in narrative. It is a colorful dramatization of the struggle for wealth and power, of social disorder, violence and dishonesty, and the facts are proved with a wealth of detail and testimony drawn from official sources and the standard works of Myers, Tarbell, Noyes, Sokolski, Commons, Barron, and others. But the author takes a romantic disdainful view of our rugged, cunning princes of wealth, holding them as dealers in shoddy goods, stolen goods, as raiders of private and public property ever engaged in mysterious skirmishings, ever ready to ensnare competitors, friends, and associates. Thus the plan of the work is impressive, but contradictory. The author's gallery of violent entrepreneurs holds not evil giants, not predatory magnates conspiring for strategic positions in trade and finance, not powerful organizers, but petty old men withal, insane treacherous hagglers, cheap and grasping, below the average in intelligence. Only Gould and Rockefeller stand out as gifted organizers and administrators, as great achievers in the work of industrial organization; for the rest, their ability and their place in organizing the functioning of mills and factories, ships and railroads, markets and banks, are sadly neglected or underestimated. It may be argued that the so-called captains of industry had no understanding of the processes of economic life, or that they were indifferent to social welfare, but they nonetheless possessed infinite resourcefulness, shrewdness, efficiency, and sagacity. They were ruthless as tamers of economic forces and not as swashbucklers. Nor does the author take account of the populist and labor movements of this period which forced a change in the methods and policies of his Robber Barons. Moreover, it would be difficult, for instance, to account for the Old Testament traits of ferocity and clannishness, for the dominant Puritan or Protestant faith, sobriety and self-denial, on the basis of economic determinism, that the industrial revolution made this riot of knavery inevitable. True, they were money-getters, "big" and successful, essentially unattractive, without humor or refinement, and not barons, but surely not petty thieves.

BUSINESS LOOKS AT THE UNFORESEEN. By Wallace Brett Donham. New York; McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1933. Pp. 209.

The dismal thing of to-day is not the science of economics but the social failure to appreciate what has taken place in an economy of mass production, the social failure to absorb into our thinking, and hence into our social policy, the far-reaching implications of mass production and of "surplus" economy. This from the Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration and a director of a number of business corporations. His aim is to define "the long-term objectives . . . for the better adjustment of business to the society of which it is a part." Dean Donham has already in his former work *Business Adrift* suggested a theory of foresight for planned action and intelligent direction of the major significant forces of industrial life, involving also a theory of adjustment or the time limits within which prediction can be made with any assurance. He asserts that enlightened self-interest demands that business leaders revise their proportionate expenditure of time between the affairs of business and the broad social and economic implications of business; that the leadership called for to-day is not the leadership of individual men thinking in terms of separate companies and business objectives, but group leadership accepting social objectives and thinking in terms of whole industries and regions; that, moreover, we cannot wait on fortuitous events or trust ourselves to a policy of drift. While he recommends a central planning board by means of which both government and business should coöperate, such a board need not involve control by bureaucracy. What shall be the nature of the planned society? "Henceforth," he writes, "high real wages and continuous work are a condition precedent to good business. In the future the distribution of purchasing power among masses of people will be more important to the continuance of good business than the rapid accumulation of fixed capital."